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FULL PREVIEW OF SUNDAY'S RACE OF CHAMPIONS

AUTOSPORT

South African GP: Lauda and Ferrari again

AUTOSPORT

BRITAIN'S MOTOR SPORTING WEEKLY

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Sign of things to come? We hear this week that the Tyrrell Grand Prix team have built and are currently testing a pukka six-wheel Formula 1 version of Project 34 for use in the forthcoming world championship races.

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EDITORIAL

Strong combination

One of the most momentous political items of news to emerge from the South African Grand Prix last weekend was that the Grand Prix Drivers Association is to be merged with the Formula One Constructors Association, thus creating one of the most powerful and influential bodies within the sport.

On the surface it may look to be a dangerously strong monopoly combine which could dominate the future of Grand Prix racing, and indeed there is always that possibility. The past work of F1CA has shown them to be a strong and persuasive body, yet one which nevertheless put the cream of motor racing on a rational, professional basis. Their demands may have seemed extreme at times but one must remember that there was a great deal of ground to be made-up before the show could be in anyway called 'professional'. The current strength and popularity of Grand Prix racing is almost entirely due to their work — the merger with the drivers' Association should broaden the sphere of operations but we hope that it will not now put them in a position of despotic dictatorship.

The GPDA is a long established body, having been formed in the early sixties, but in recent years its status has declined somewhat, especially after efforts to make it a full time broad based professional body foundered. On occasions they tried to stand up and fight the constructors (their employers) but every time were forced to back down in clumsy, petulant style.

Their greatest problem was that it was difficult to find a President, a man who had recent racing experience in Formula 1, and yet had the necessary time to devote to the organisation. The drivers themselves admit that it is not a job which can be combined with a full time Grand Prix racing career, as each individual would be protecting his own interests rather than taking a rational view which would benefit the Association and the sport as a whole. With the departure to New Zealand of last year's ideal president, Denny Hulme, the presidency was a yawning gap which could not truly be filled by anyone who was suitably qualified.

The GPDA will now be represented by a committee of drivers, consisting of James Hunt, Emerson Fittipaldi, Niki Lauda and Jean-Pierre Jarier — all of whom have enough experience and ability to represent the views of their members objectively. The previous Association which consisted of a body of over 20 people, all with different ideas, was unwieldy and ineffectual because it could never produce a united front. We hope that the new Association will give a new image and bring new respect to the Grand Prix drivers and their views.

Hunt's turn?

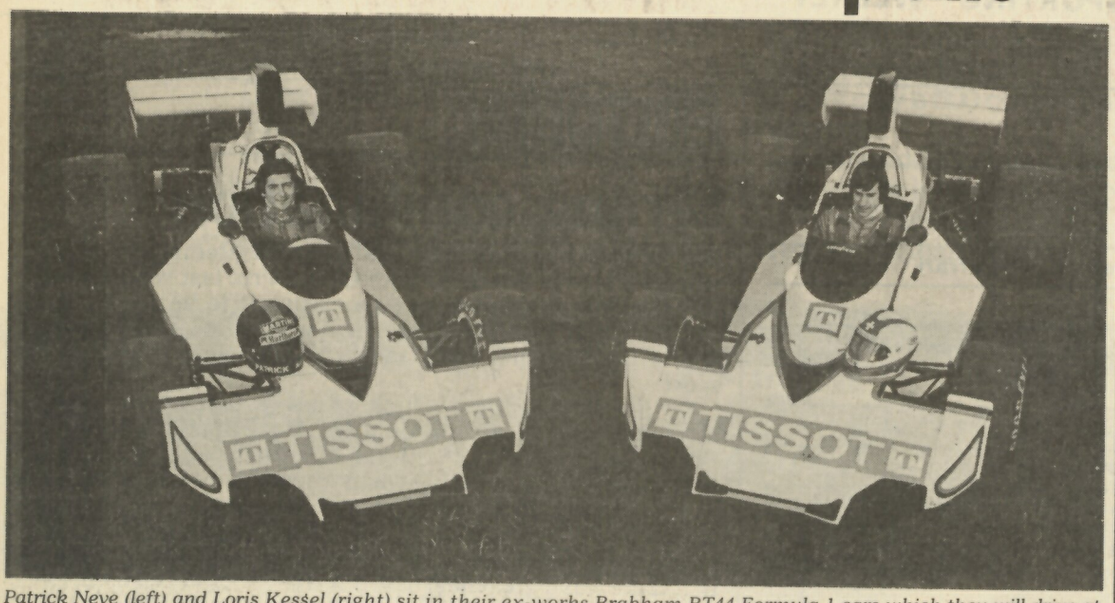
This weekend sees the Race of Champions at Brands Hatch which will give British fans the first of three opportunities to see Grand Prix cars in action this season. The entry for the race, which will definitely be held on the new circuit, is the best of any non-championship event for some years, and the intriguing question is will Niki Lauda be able to hold off the pressure of Britain's James Hunt for another race?

It promises to be a really fascinating meeting.

our cover picture

Niki Lauda took his Ferrari to yet another Grand Prix victory at Kyalami last Saturday – this weekend he'll be in the very latest model at the Brands Hatch Race of Champions. *Photo: Phipps Photographic.*

RAM announce their F1 plans



Patrick Neve (left) and Loris Kessel (right) sit in their ex-works Brabham BT44 Formula 1 cars which they will drive at Brands Hatch this weekend under the management of RAM.

The much rumoured and long-awaited RAM Formula 1 team will be making its debut at the Race of Champions this weekend with two ex-works Ford powered Brabham BT44Cs. The cars will be sponsored by Tissot Watches, Ambrozium and Thursdays, the London nightclub which backed the team's immaculate and successful F5000 March last year and which did so much good work helping to promote race meetings.

Drivers for this weekend at least, will be Belgian Patrick Neve and Swiss Loris Kessel. Team boss John Macdonald was not in a position to say on Tuesday whether this would be the combination for the year, but he did add that following testing at Goodwood last week he was very happy with both drivers. Both drivers are, of course, new to Formula 1 racing although Neve has done a considerable amount of testing over the winter in a number of different chassis. Kessel is a graduate from Formula 2, where he was often a very fast runner, although rather inconsistent. After testing last week Macdonald said of him: "I was impressed, he's a real racer."

The cars were at Goodwood last Thursday and Friday and on the second day, despite very cold conditions, the drivers did 1m 8.4s and 1m 8.5s respectively, which are very acceptable times.

Following the precedent set by RAM bosses John Macdonald and Mick Ralph last year the cars are absolutely immaculate in their pale blue, dark blue and white colour scheme.

Perkins in BRM at Brands

Stanley-BRM confirmed on Tuesday of this week that Larry Perkins will be driving their P201C chassis at this weekend's Race of Champions. This is indeed quite a surprise as many felt that Ian Ashley, who drove for the team in Brazil, would be given another outing in the car.

"At a time when we're searching for ourselves, we're also trying out several new drivers. We ran Ashley in Brazil, we've tested with Patrick Neve and now we've tried Larry," said a Stanley-BRM spokesman.

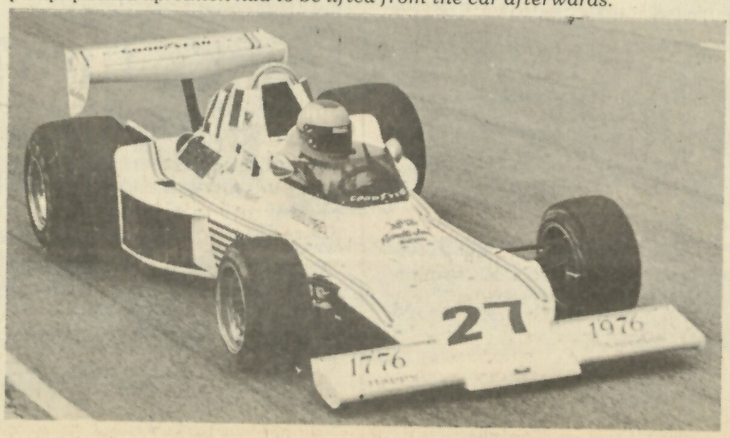
Perkins tested the car at Snetterton last Thursday where the team spent the whole day running without any major problems. Perkins in fact completed a Grand Prix distance, impressed sufficiently and was invited to race the car at Brands.

What of his commitment to the Dutch HB Bewaking team? "As far as we know, he has no commitment at all and, if things go well, he may even be offered a possible contract."

● James Hunt's second successive Grand Prix pole position last weekend was the first time this feat had been achieved by an Englishman since Stirling Moss did it at Argentina and Monaco in 1960.

Seen in South Africa

Chris Amon was the hero of last weekend's South African Grand Prix. Driving the old original Ensign, the New Zealander qualified quite well and pulled through the field and was challenging Mario Andretti's revised Parnelli (below) for 6th place near the end; then one of the Ensign's fuel pumps packed up. Amon had to be lifted from the car afterwards.



GPDA link with F1CA

Just when everyone expected the Grand Prix Driver's Association to announce their new President at last weekend's South African Grand Prix, a statement was issued which changed the whole structure of this body.

As the result of a joint agreement between the Formula One Constructors Association (F1CA) and the Grand Prix Drivers' Association (GPDA), the GPDA as a seperate body will cease to exist and a Drivers Committee to represent all Grand Prix drivers will become part of the FICA.

This Drivers Committee, which will be party to all discussions within the F1CA concerning drivers' safety, will be elected annually and for 1976 will consist of the following: Emerson Fittipaldi, James Hunt, Jean-Pierre Jarier, Nicki Lauda and Jody Scheckter.

The sole purpose of this amalgamation is for the continued improvement in the standard, image and promotion of Grand Prix racing in all its aspects.

Thus the GPDA, as we knew it, has been dissolved.

Brands Hatch: new track okay

John Webb confirmed on Tuesday morning that the new Brands Hatch circuit will be used for the first time this weekend. The fine weather last week enabled all the surfacing of the new Paddock Bend and Bottom Straight to be completed in time to allow it to settle.

The new paddock however will not be used as it is felt that it is too early to put big transporters on the new surface.

The RAC have insisted that serated kerbs must be placed between the old and the new Paddock bend track to make sure that competitors don't use the full width, and this was being put in early this week.

Following the rebuilding of the circuit the corners and straights have mostly been renamed. Paddock Bend remains then cars go up Hailwood Rise, round Druids, down Graham Hill, round Graham Hill Bend, along Cooper Straight, round Surtees, right round McLaren on the Club Circuit, into Clark Corner and back onto Brabham straight.

Purley out

News came through on Tuesday lunchtime that David Purley, who was entered to drive a Surtees TS16 Formula 1 at the Race of Champions this weekend, will not now be competing.

Arrangements had been made between Purley's Lec Refrigeration team and Team Surtees to hire the ex-Dave Morgan car but, according to Lec team manager Mike Earle, the deal is now off and Purley will not be racing at Brands.

Meanwhile David has been testing the revised Lec Chevron-Ford V6 down at Goodwood, recording an exceptionally rapid 1m 9.4s on Tuesday.

Keith Prowse to back British Touring Car series

Keith Prowse, the world's largest theatre ticket agency, are to sponsor the RAC's British Saloon Car Championship.

This move came as a result of Keith Prowse taking a controlling interest in Rod Sawyer's company — RTS Special Events Limited — who are well known for their specialised travel facilities, particularly in motor racing circles.

The motor racing sponsorship, which was arranged by Motor Race Consultants on behalf of Rod Sawyer, is being used to promote the launching of a new Keith Prowse Sports Events booking centre which will fulfil a need in the present system. One central advance booking point will provide tickets for a wide variety of major sporting events, including, of course, motor racing. This concept makes it very much easier for the customer, who rarely knows where to apply for tickets. It will also help the promoters by increased attendances through the additional publicity and simplicity of ticket purchase.

Keith Prowse are establishing their 'Sports Centre' in the West End of London where the public can call and obtain tickets for a comprehensive selection of sporting events worldwide. Negotiations are currently in progress (some have already been concluded) with organisers of such events in order to secure specific stocks of tickets for immediate sale. Keith Prowse boast one of the largest private telephone exchanges in the country with over 300 lines, and with over 1,000 sales outlets throughout the UK and abroad have a superb organisation to cope with the demand.

The RAC Touring Car Championship is to be known as the Keith Prowse British Touring Car Championship with ten qualifying rounds taking place on six different circuits. All the most important British International race meetings will host a qualifying round of the Keith Prowse Championship, including the John Player Grand Prix at Brands Hatch on July 18. There will be two race meetings during the year with complete sponsorship by Keith Prowse.

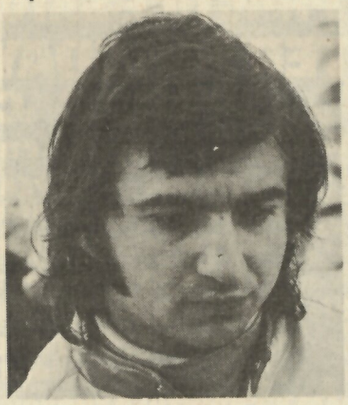
The British Touring Car Championship is, as many will already know, for mass-produced G1 Saloon Cars with a maximum engine capacity of 3000cc separated into the following classes: a) 2300-3000; b) 1600-2300; c) 1300-1600; d) up to 1300.

The qualifying rounds are: March 14, Brands Hatch; April 11, Silverstone; April 16, Oulton Park; April 19, Thruxton; May 9, Thruxton; May 31, Silverstone; July 18, Brands Hatch; August 29, Mallory Park; October 3, Snetterton; October 24, Brands Hatch.

March's new F3 team —backing for South

March Engineering were able to confirm who would be their works supported drivers in Formula 3 this year at Thruxton last weekend.

As we reported in last week's issue they entered a car at the last minute and this was driven by 23-year-old Italian Bruno Giacomelli, winner of last year's Formula Italia championship.



Bruno Giacomelli – new star?

Giacomelli comes from Brescia in Italy and this is his third season of racing, the previous two having been spent in Formula Italia. Last year was, in fact, his first full season which saw him win 9 out of the 12 qualifying races.

Sunday's race at Thruxton was his first in F3 which, if his spectacular efforts are anything to go by, should see him featuring well throughout the season.

Giacomelli receives support from a whole bevy of Italian sponsors including the CSAI and ANCAI associations, Car (who make car accessories) plus a personal friend whose nickname, Edo, appeared on the car at Thruxton.

The second car run from the factory will be for a little known Brazilian called Aryon Cornellsen. He has backing from Certa, a large fridge and washing machine manufacturers and his first race is scheduled to take place at the Easter BP round.

However, March will be pinning

Stephen South – big break

their hopes of success on 23-year-old Stephen South who is being given a brand new works chassis, but it will be run away from the Bicester factory by his current set-up.

South's ex-Alderton March 753 will be retained and raced by its owner John Stokes, still under the Bogarts of Birmingham banner.

South's new 763 series March will be ready for him to race at Easter but instead of the Novamotor prepared Toyota engines as used by most of the leading runners, March's Sandro Angeleri has done a deal whereby Novamotor in Italy will produce specially developed BMW units for Stephen to use in this country.

BMW test new 530 at Kyalami

When all the dust had settled and the Grand Prix circus had moved on, it wasn't long before the Kyalami track, situated in the suburbs of Johannesburg, was called into action once again. Booking the circuit for three days testing at the beginning of this week were BMW Motorsport GmbH who brought out a specially built 3-litre BMW 530 4-door saloon for Gunnar Nilsson to test.

The car has been prepared to the South African modified production saloon regulations by Josef Schnitzer, the Austrian engine tuner now having his preparation business absorbed within the BMW Motorsport factory at the request of Competitions Manager Jochen Neerspach.

The South African regulations are very strict and there's little that can be done to the car which, by European standards, is far too heavy to be considered as a potential ETTC race machine.

The car was built in Germany but if the tests go well this week, then BMW's large assembly plant in South Africa will build a replica to run in the local series. As yet no drivers have been chosen. However, to comply with the local regs, at least 100 replicas of the car must be produced as road cars, complete with the Getrag 5-speed racing gearbox and 16in diameter wheels.

Six-wheel on

As we confidently expected, Elf Team Tyrrell are going ahead with plans to race their exciting six-wheel Grand Prix car (Project 34) in future Formula 1 races. Although the new car, which we hear is substantially different to the original prototype, will not be racing at the Race of Champions as first thought, details of it will no doubt have been released to the national papers by the time you read this.

It was due to have been testing at Silverstone this week. Further details in next week's issue.

Magee's G8

Damien Magee looks as though he has got his best chance yet of harnessing his ability to a competitive car. The news came this week that he will be driving the RAM March-Ford V6 F5000 car in the Shellsport European 5000 championship this season.

RAM's John Macdonald confirmed on Tuesday that Damien, who works at the team's north London premises, will be driving the car at Mallory Park on March 21 and he hoped for the rest of the season, although the team's F1 commitments would, of course, take priority. Sponsorship for the car is not yet confirmed.

The March is being updated to 761 specification while further work on the V6 engine over the winter should see it even more competitive and reliable than it was last year.

Marcis beats Petty

Having been postponed two weeks earlier because of bad weather, the Richmond 400 NASCAR race took place last Sunday and was held over 400 laps of the tiny local 0.542 mile circuit. Amazing to relate, Bobby Allison was present to take up his pole position in a Penske Mercury, despite having landed himself in hospital for most of the week following his huge shunt the previous weekend.

Allison was released from hospital last Wednesday, his injuries being confined to cuts on his chest but rather nastier abrasions on his face. Apparently during the course of his spectacular accident, his face scraped the tarmac. This meant that Allison had to wear an eye patch for several days and keep out of the sunlight, certainly until the end of the week.

Talking about the shunt, Allison said: "I know it was kinda spectacular but that IROC crash I had at Riverside a year ago was the worst I ever had."

The race itself featured a three way battle between Allison's front row partner Dave Marcis (K & K Insurance Dodge), Richard Petty's similar car and Cale Yarborough (Valvoline Chevelle).

Yarborough dropped away towards the end to finish 4th behind Allison who was having to cope with the Penske team's unsuitable superspeedway Mercury as the short track car had been totally destroyed the week before.

Apart from a brief period when Lennie Pond's Coca Cola Chevelle took advantage of a yellow light period to lead at three-quarters distance, it was albeit rather short for he collided with a slower car.

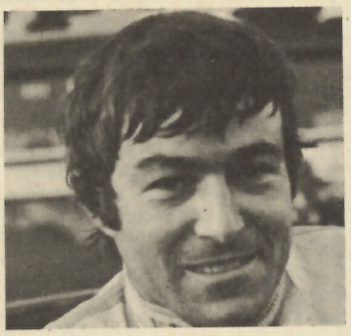
It was neck and neck for the last 20 laps, 35-year-old Marcis (who finished runner-up to Petty in last year's NASCAR GN series) hitting the front with 5 miles to go. A yellow light period came on near the end but cleared in time for the leaders to have a flat-out final lap, Marcis just hanging on to pip Petty and win his second ever NASCAR race at an average speed of 72.792 mph.

● Due to industrial action by British Rail, readers in Eastern England may well have difficulty in obtaining this week's copy on time.

Brodie's G1 Mazda RX3

Dave Brodie is back in racing but, surprisingly enough, it's not in a Ford. Instead Brodie has turned his attentions to this year's British Touring Car Championship and he will be running a works supported Mazda RX3 in the series, thus providing a formidable challenge to the works Broadspeed Triumph Dolomites of Andy Rouse and Steve Thompson.

"We weren't going racing this year," explained Mazda's public relations man David Palmer, "but as Dave showed interest, we couldn't let the Dolomites have the series for nothing."



Dave Brodie – back again

The car is a brand new RX3 with the latest homologated rotary engine (of the usual 2.3-litre equivalance) which is being prepared by Racing Services. Brodie's own team is building the car down in Bagshot but, as the car will run under the auspice of the Mazda Dealer Team, general racing preparation will be carried out at Brodie's local Mazda dealer in Maidenhead.

The car, which will only just be finished in time for this weekend's opening race at Brands, will be painted in Brodie's familiar black colour scheme complete with yellow pin-striping.

Run-baby-run.

Supersports join G6 series

Paul Watson, joint secretary of the Sports Cars International assocation which looks after the interests of Group 6 sports cars, its teams and drivers, has been increasingly worried about the number of G6 cars likely to contest the opening rounds of the RAC Championship which begins with two feature races at Snetterton and Silverstone over Easter.

Discussions with John Webb of MCD and Peter Browning of the BRSCC have resulted in an agreement to invite Class A Clubmans cars to take part in a seperate class at sports car races with their own prize money scale of £75, £50 and £25 per car. They will not qualify for G6 Championship prize money and points, but the prospects of the faster Clubmans cars running against the two litres, especially on the tighter circuits, could be interesting. At circuits only but similar proposals have also been put to the BRDC and BARC in respect of races at Silverstone and Thruxton.

Peter Evans, secretary of the Clubmans Register, has agreed to co-operate with entries which shouldn't be difficult as at several of the RAC Championship events Clubmans cars already have a seperate race. Prospective Clubmans competitors will need to fit slightly larger fuel tanks to go the distance.

At present there appears to be between twelve and fifteen active G 6 cars available in this country for the Championship which includes those cars and drivers not normally seen in international events. Evans reckons on some thirty five Class A cars which could quite easily be split between Sports Cars and Clubmans events at the meetings where there are two races.

Ray Jessop

It is with deep regret that we have to announce the death last weekend of racing car designer Ray Jessop who died following a heart attack. Jessop, who was in his mid 40s, had been admitted to hospital 10 days earlier following a stroke but suffered a relapse.

Quiet and unassuming, Jessop came into motor racing in the mid 60s via his position at the British Aircraft Corporation where he was in charge of the wind tunnel. His engineering expertise saw him introduced to Ron Tauranac of Motor Racing Developments (*ie* Brabhams) by BAC test pilot Dizzy Addicott, well known for his exploits in a Chevrolet-powered Elva sports car. Jessop did some development work for Tauranac before leaving BAC to join MRD and work on Ron's design staff.

When Bernie Ecclestone took over the company at the end of 1971, Jessop continued to work there for a further 18 months or so, assisting on the Formula 2 BT38 model, the type being used by Rondel Racing at the time.

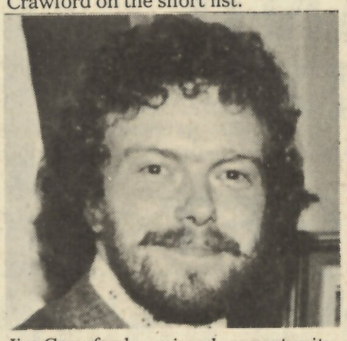
Jessop then left Brabham in 1972 and joined Rondel to design their own car which became known as the Motul M1. He also designed a Formula 1 project which subsequently became known as the Token, but didn't actually appear until *Daily Express* International Trophy at Silverstone in 1974 driven by Tom Pryce.

The name Token was dropped at the end of that year and a new company called Safir Engineering took over the assets with Jessop again very much in evidence. The F1 car was run occasionally for Tony Trimmer but most of the low budget efforts were centred around Patrick Neve's splendid efforts in the Safir F3 car.

To his wife, family and all his friends, may we express our deepest sympathies at this unfortunate loss.

Lyncar F1 won't go

Northern racing car "wheeler-dealer" Bob Howlings was a trifle upset when we spoke to him earlier this week. He'd entered the ex-John Nicholson Formula 1 Lyncar for the Race of Champions this weekend, admittedly with the driver still to be nominated. However, Bob told us that last week he's been informed that he wouldn't get a race. Understanding the fact that he was one of the reserves and only 18 cars would be allowed to start, Howlings was still prepared to practice the car and had, among several drivers, Jim Crawford on the short list.



Jim Crawford – missed opportunity

It looks as if there's been a certain amount of confusion over the car's entry and although John Webb of MCD said earlier this week that Jim Crawford was "quite acceptable," Howlings didn't reckon on the way he's been treated and wouldn't now be going. "They'll have to pay me before I'll go now," he said.

Jim's loss and gain

Talking of Jim Crawford, his plans to fo F2 this year with a German sponsor seem to have fallen through. Apparently the German company, after getting very enthusiastic and participating in filming for the BBC TV "Tomorrow's World" programme, decided that it did not want to spread its involvement beyond Germany and Austria. So now Jim is left with the offer of a car and BMW engine from Chevron provided he can find someone to pay the running costs which Chevron themselves cannot afford to underwrite. In the meantime he has the offer of a one-off drive by Bob Howlings in the John Nicholson F1 Lyncar at the first round of the Shellsport 5000 championship at Mallory Park.

"If I can get around £5,000 or £6,000, I'll gladly run him all year in the car. He'll always finish in the first three and on that prize money, we could get by."

● Electronic timing was in use for the first time at Brands Hatch last Sunday. The Piper-Zetacron equipment has been fully approved by the RAC and produces more information, more quickly than has been known before in this country. The new equipment will only be used at BRSCC meetings for the time being while teams of timekeepers are being trained for other circuits.

Champagne winner

Congratulations to Miss Pam Young, from Chinnor, Oxfordshire who is the first winner of our Moet and Chandon Predict the Winner competition. Nearly one third of the enormous number of postcards we received predicted Niki Lauda as the winner but Miss Young's 116.50 mph was the nearest to the actual average winning speed of 116.58 mph. It was close though, a couple of others being just .06 mph either way.

It was interesting to discover that no less than 13 of the 25 competing drivers received votes the others being James Hunt, Jochen Mass, Tom Pryce, Ronnie Peterson, Clay Regazzoni, Carlos Reutemann, Patrick Depailler, Jody Scheckter, Jean-Pierre Jarier, John Watson, Vittorio Brambilla and Jacques Laffite.

There's another bottle of Moet and Chandon to be won for choosing the winner of the United States (West) GP to be held at Long Beach on March 28. There's no previous GP form to go on so it's wide open (the inaugural F5000 was won at an average speed of 86.32 mph). Predictions on a postcard please (and don't forget to put your own address on it) to Autosport Editorial, 54-62 Regent Street, London W1A 2YJ to reach us no later than Friday, March 26.

Brands TV OK

There was some doubt being spread last weekend about the BBC's acceptance of cigarette and Durex sponsorship on the cars during the Race of Champions. However John Webb told us on Tuesday that as far as he knew there were no problems. "TV have always agreed to accept what is normally part of motor racing. What they don't like is one-off deals which are aimed specifically at getting TV coverage. I gather they spent some time last Sunday afternoon explaining that the schedule would be different this week because of the Race of Champions coverage."

The great race

Supporting the Long Beach Grand Prix (or US GP West to give it the correct title) is a vintage race that will, undoubtedly, go down as the greatest ever yet staged.

The organisers, at great expense, have got together the following drivers to take part in this handicap event (based on practice times): Juan-Manual Fangio (Mercedes-Benz W196), Stirling Moss and Innes Ireland (Maserati 250Fs), 1926 Indy winner Pete de Paolo (Bugatti), Carroll Shelby (Maserati), Maurice Trintingnant (Talbot-Lago), Jack Brabham and Denny Hulme (Coopers), John Surtees and Phil Hill (Ferraris), Consalvo Sanefi (Alfa Romeo), Rene Dreyfus (Bugatti) and Dan Gurney, the latter's car still to be decided. That will be some race of champions.

Samuri continue to run Toyotas in 1976

As well as their various club racing activities described in *Sports Extra*, Samuri Racing are again in the fray this year in the RAC British Touring Car championship. Last year Win Percy finished second in the series with equal points to Andy Rouse, and this year he will again be contesting the series with a new 1.6 Toyota Celica GT in the same class. Having already lapped Silverstone 2s under his old record, Percy's biggest problem is competitors. For this weekend's opening round at Brands Hatch, he has absolutely no class opposition whatsoever, and currently, it unfortunately looks like a fruitless trail. The Celica will run under the Team Toyota banner.

Joining the team permanently after a successful drive at the Ingliston round last year in their second team car is Barrie Williams. The jovial Whizzo will no doubt be doing more spectacular things in his little Toyota 1000 Publica in which he will contest the up to 1300 cc class where he'll be up against lots of Alfas of various sorts. The car will be entered by Samuri Racing.

However, both drivers will team up for the occasional Group 2 race, for the Bedford based Samuri are building up a G2 1.6 Celica for use in occasional races, including Spa 24 hours and the Tourist Trophy. The cars are all engineered by Barry Hudson and team managed by Bob Gathercole.

Reaping some of the expensive 1975 campaign, Samuri are currently preparing two cars for Willy Braillard to drive in Belgium. They are to be entered by the Belgian Toyota importer International Motor Company, and with split races, Braillard will drive a new 2.0 Celica Liftback in the big races, and a 1000 Publica in the small races. It all adds up to considerable participation, and Samuri will be a name of which we hear a lot this year. They're already talking of Williams *one*-wheeling through the Silverstone chicane!

Briefly . . .

● For the first time Silverstone Circuits have been able to arrange a much improved public transport service to the circuit for all major race meetings. For the first two, this weekend and March 28, a bus service will operate from Northampton's Derngate Bus Station to the circuit. It will leave at 1.15 pm and return after racing. Price is just 69p return. Northampton is well served by rail and buses from all major towns and the new service provides the final link. (Further services for the Graham Hill International Trophy will be announced later.)

● Dick Jeffrey, who retired from Dunlop after 37 years service earlier this year, will, however, not be absent from the circuits. He has recently been appointed a director of APG Autosport, a division of the Allied Polymer Group.

● Gunnar Nilsson can take comfort from his disappointing last position on the grid at Kyalami last weekend – the last person to be in the same position in a works Lotus was Emerson Fittipaldi in Mexico in 1970. He went on to win a couple of World Championships . . .

● Individual fastest laps in last weekend's South African Grand Prix were as follows: Niki Lauda, 1m 17.9s (lap 6); James Hunt, 1m 18.08s (lap 6); Jacques Laffite, 1m 18.20s (lap 32); Jody Scheckter, 1m 18.38s (lap 34); Vittorio Brambilla, 1m 18.49s (lap 21); Patrick Depailler, 1m 18.60s (lap 8); Jochen Mass, 1m 18.65s (lap 7); Tom Pryce, 1m 18.73s (lap 76); Ronnie Peterson, 1m 18.79s (lap 4); Clay Regazzoni, 1m 18.88s (lap 6); Emerson Fittipaldi, 1m 18.92s (lap 39); John Watson, 1m 18.94s (lap 7); Chris Amon, 1m 19.00s (lap 25); Mario Andretti, 1m 19.15s (lap 7); Carlos Pace, 1m 19.37s (lap 2); Carlos Reutemann, 1m 19.42s (lap 12); Jean-Pierre Jarier, 1m 19.82s (lap 2); Brett Lunger, 1m 19.83s (lap 45); Bob Evans, 1m 19.84s (lap 26); Hans-Joachim Stuck, 1m 19.86s (lap 30); Gunnar Nilsson, 1m 20.00s (lap 7); Jacky Ickx, 1m 20.03s (lap 39); Michel Leclére, 1m 20.08s (lap 4) and Harald Ertl, 1m 22.70s (lap 54).

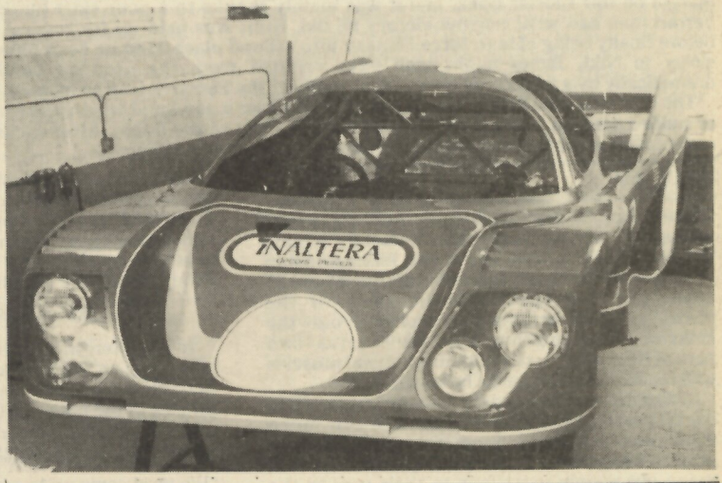
● Advance ticket sales for this year's Swedish Grand Prix which takes place on June 13 has surpassed all records and totals over £135,000. Following last year's "flop" when only 20,000 spectators attended the race, this year's event will *not* be televised by the Swedish broadcasting authority.

Campari back G1 Alfas

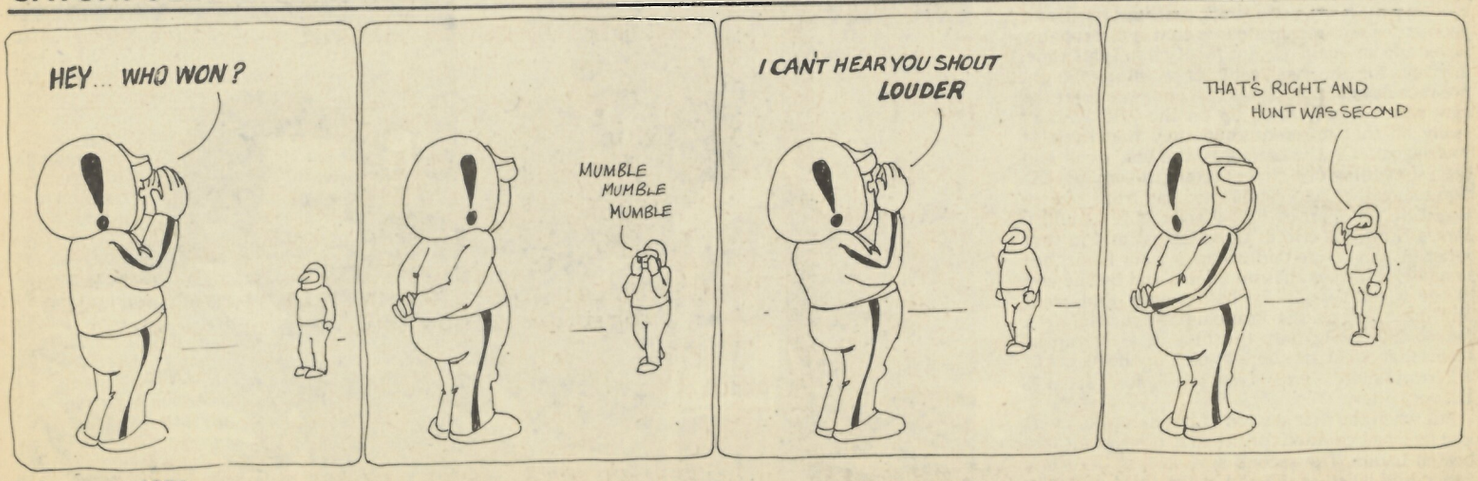
Campari, the Italian owned drinks concern, announced last week that they will be sponsoring the British Alfa Romeo Dealers team in the national G1 series this year. Making their debuts in the Alfasud Tis at Brands Hatch this weekend are Jon Dooley (left) and Simon Kirkby (right).

Inaltera G6 unveiled

The French-constructed Ford-Cosworth DFV powered Inaltera G6 sports car was unveiled in Paris recently. Driving the two cars entered solely for Le Mans are Jean-Pierre Beltoise, Henri Pescarolo, Jean-Pierre Jaussaud, Jean Rondeau and Christine Beckers.



CATCHPOLE — **By Barry Foley**



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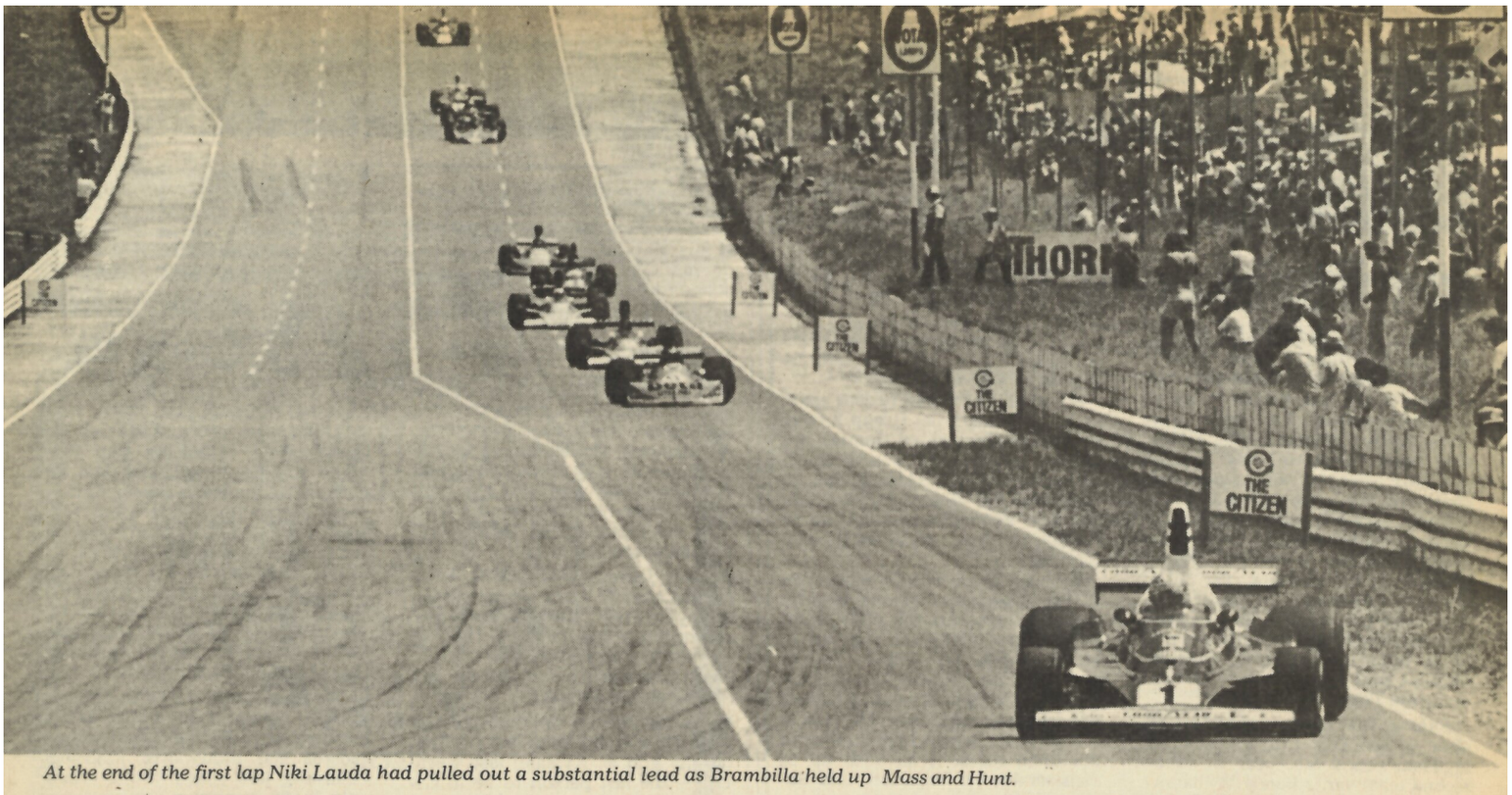


At the end of the first lap Niki Lauda had pulled out a substantial lead as Brambilla held up Mass and Hunt.

SOUTH AFRICAN GRAND PRIX/KYALAMI

McLarens hunt Ferrari

By PETE LYONS **Photos By PHIPPS PHOTOGRAPHIC**

Race Data by ALAN PHILLIPS

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP FOR DRIVERS

round two

So it's two in a row now for the World Champion — three in a row if we go back to last year — but in South Africa, Niki Lauda had to work harder than before. As in Brazil he lost pole to James Hunt, by a wider margin on this shorter track, and it was mainly thanks to a poor start by the McLaren driver that the Ferrari man had what narrow victory he did. Hunt was held up for several laps by Vittorio Brambilla before finally being able to force his way into second place. Had he been able to stay just a few seconds closer to Niki, James might well have profited from the growing handling problems — capped dramatically by a punctured tyre — that reduced the Ferrari's lead to under 1.5s by the flag.

The *Citizen* Grand Prix of South Africa was in fact a good and worthwhile race all the way, with dicing or sudden position changes right down the line right to the finish. After spending two weeks in the sun, many teams must face the season to come with renewed confidence.

ENTRY

If the atmosphere at the Brazilian GP six weeks earlier had been something like a training match, the South African felt like a full championship bout. Thanks to Goodyear, the majority of the 25 contestants had spent at least some of the preceding week strenuously working out the kinks of winter and thus faced the eventual two days of Kyalami practice with mechanical muscles well toned and team spirits inflamed.

As has been chronicled in AUTOSPORT recently, the tyre test programme was used to test much more than just tyres. Most teams carried out extensive experiments of a developmental nature, trying out mainly variations to their cars in the areas of aerodynamics and suspensions. During the six days were seen a multitude of new shapes, scoops, panels, brackets, links, castings, positions, geometries and arrangements that will probably never appear again. Or not for Kyalami this time, anyway, for the net result of a total of eight pre-race days of testing and practice was that the cars which finally lined up on the grid weren't really all that different than they had been at Interlagos! On the face of it, the test week had been something of a trial of strength between the two teams that had established the front row in Brazil. It was Ferrari v McLaren, Niki Lauda v James Hunt, the two of them fastest and in that order. It was a fine performance from Hunt, but Lauda was always that bit ahead, and by the end of the week it would be bold money that went anywhere but on the Prancing Horse. McLaren looked like being only the first in a line-up of teams that could only hope to pick up the pieces of a Ferrari failure. Ferraris nowadays don't seem to fail very often.

But when the first session of practice was over, and laps had counted for the first time, Hunt had beaten Lauda. The second session had the same result, and when at the end of the third officially timed session he had done it yet again the pattern of the race to come looked somewhat different. James had triumphed by a tenth of a second and was taking up his second career GP pole position in as many outings with Marlboro Team McLaren. (They are pleased with him.)

Pneumatic starter

It was interesting to reflect that the M23 design was doing its fourth South African GP, for it was here three years ago that it started out its F1 life on pole in the hands of Denny Hulme. To be sure, much has been altered in the time since, and there was a latest tweak for the anniversary party too. Fitted to Hunt's car only, and for practice only, was a means of starting up the engine pneumatically rather than electrically. The innards of an air-wrench had been grafted onto the basic bendix drive, and was normally supplied with air during start-ups in the pits through a hose from a large cylinder. To comply with the regulations about on-board starting systems there was a smallish pressure bottle replacing the normal battery; a smaller battery took care of the various remaining electrical necessities.

The net result of all this McLaren enterprise was a secret but obviously useful reduction in overall weight, and perhaps some gain in reliability as well. But with characteristic conservatism the Kiwis reverted to normal electrics for the race — it would not do at all to experience the pneumatic system's first "bug" as James pushed the button on Saturday afternoon!

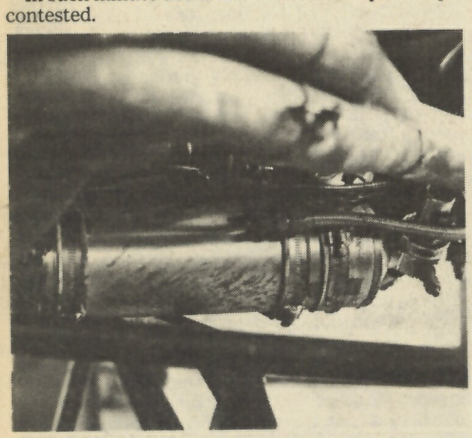
There was another mod designed to ensure that James's breakdown in Brazil should never happen again. Although initial theories indicated that his misfire and eventual crash were due to metering unit trouble, the true cause turned out to be an engine inlet trumpet coming loose from the

"We must come up to the line really slowly, so the others don't get the jump on us" – Niki obviously wasn't listening.

throttle slide assembly. This, of course, robbed the affected cylinder of its fuel injection nozzle as well, and as it was the rearward trumpet on the left bank it eventually flopped down behind the slide and wedged it in the full open position against a hose at a wrong moment, thus sending James off the road, Jarier off after him, and Lauda off to the finish line without opposition.

The most annoying part of all this was that the trumpet wouldn't have come off in the first place even though its primary fixing, a small capscrew, had come out had not the airbox too been loose at the back end. So both cars came to Africa with stout tubular stays holding the rear of the airbox solidly down.

In such minute detail are World Championships contested.



The experimental compressed air starter motor used on Hunt's McLaren in practice.

The ultimately successful car in Brazil, quickest all through Kyalami testing as well, finally went to the second race of the year in the same trim as it had won the first. Although Lauda spent some of the test week time trying out a version of a de Dion rear suspension bolted onto his 312T, and was able to lap within about a tenth of a second of his times with normal rear suspension, there was a bothersome instability with the "beam" axle and he reverted to standard.

Like the M23, the 312T was having a birthday at Kyalami, its first in this case; it was interesting to recall that unlike the McLaren the Ferrari hadn't been outstanding upon its debut. It made up for that later.

Whereas Lauda's teammate Clay Regazzoni — who whether it was a factor or not had not been included in the week of testing — never showed the same sort of speed and after trying both his own car and the spare car with no real improvement wound up ninth on the grid, Hunt's teammate Jochen Mass was actually third quickest by the end of qualifying. The astute reader will notice however that he appears in fourth place on the grid. In the interests of building up literary excitement, the reason will not be discussed until later on in the report.

Skirts

John Watson started third, and in truth the Ulsterman had been doing a fine job of work all the week. Always among the quickest during testing, he moved up steadily throughout practice and ended up the final session but two hundredths of a second below Carlos Pace's 1975 pole position time of 1m 16.41s. The only external development in the First National City Bank Penske since Brazil was a form of aerodynamic skirting of plastic strips hung around the base of the tub. These devices are not new, now, in F1, as March, McLaren, and Brabham all have similar ways of discouraging airflow under their cars, but those fitted to the PC-3 are, while of course fixed, the most reminiscent yet of the famous articulated skirts of the Chaparral 2J CanAm car.

It is interesting to realise that Don Cox, who will be concentrating on the development side of Penske's F1 programme this year, was an engineer employed by Chevrolet and attached to Chaparral in the late 1960's and was responsible for the basic 2J chassis.

All this came to naught in the race, for CSI officials caused them to be removed from the Penske and from the McLarens as well on grounds that they contravened the regulations about wing height. Watson said the skirts hadn't done much anyway.

Watson used both the newer and the older chassis during practice, finding that they handled somewhat differently, and he selected the older one to race.

As the Penske design was quick, so the not dissimilar March design was quick, and Vittorio Brambilla put the Beta 761 onto fifth grid place. It was this No 1 of the series that had the most in the way of mods, most noticeably larger side radiators, and it was definitely at critical stages of practice the fastest of the three 761s on the straight — so fast that while Vittorio could slipstream past Ferraris, the flat-12s couldn't pay him back in kind. All three of the Marches had a new pattern of nosepiece, more rounded in profile.

Still resplendent in its yellow-and-blue colours of "the city of Turin," the second works March was now being driven by Ronnie Peterson, who is not Italian. What he is, nowadays, is happy. That he wasn't quite as quick as he perhaps expected to be seemed to bother him only a little — his car like Hans Stuck's was mysteriously lagging in a straight line, despite trials of three different engines. His driving itself was a satisfaction to watch, one spectating driver remarking, "Hasn't Ronnie become an old smoothie!" and he was seen to smile frequently. There seemed to be a mood of optimism. As one of the March heirarchy put it, trying to describe the feeling of the team about their renewed association, "When you go back to an old lover it takes time to get settled in together again."

Atrocious

That Patrick Depailler put the Elf Tyrrell onto the third row was something of a surprise. Neither during testing nor during early practice were the Tyrrell 007s — three of them being entered — fast at all. They all three handled atrociously, Ian Scheckter explaining "I'm not so much driving the car as trying to prevent it spinning." During the first practice session the three were lapping at more or less the same speed, toward the bottom of anything that could be called a competitive speed.

Suddenly however the two Elf cars in the afternoon session spurted ahead, leaving Ian muttering in frustration, "They've done something to their cars but they won't tell me what." Part of the answer seemed to have to do with rear suspension geometry, for on Depailler's chassis, the one used as a tyre test hack the week before by both himself and Jody, had been fitted a 1975 pattern rear. Bits to reconvert his teammate's to the same spec were held up by airfreight trouble at Las Palmas (there were other spares and two complete tool boxes up there too) and these didn't arrive until the evening of the first practice day. Peculiarly, however, on the second day Jody was slower while both Patrick and Ian bettered themselves, and the grumpy Jody nearly fell into the clutches of his brother. It was only his Wednesday time that kept him two rows ahead, and not even reminding him that last year before his sensational race drive he had been complaining about his car handling badly seemed to brighten his mood.

Tom Pryce, who had sweated out a case of 'flu in England while Jean-Pierre Jarier thrashed his Shadow around Kyalami in testing, wound up four rows ahead on the grid. The main reason seemed to be that chassis 2A (which is really No 6) for some reason handled better than 1A, which was actually last year's No 4 brought out to replace the new tub damaged in the Interlagos shunt, Jean-Pierre reporting that he couldn't make it do things he'd done routinely with Tom's in the test. He had mechanical troubles besides. Outwardly, the main change in appearance of the Shadows was vanes added to the side rad ducts — that, and sponsorship for this one race only, by Lucky Strike cigaretttes. Both cars were set for the race on short wheelbases.

Eighth on the grid, up two rows from its performance in Brazil, was the lone Ligier-Matra. The Gitanes car was essentially as run at its first race, apart from the adoption of Italian wheels rather than German, and only the snapping of a bottom front wishbone in testing (metal adjacent to a weld had cracked; the piece was beefed up for race week) had marred its week in Africa. Thereafter it ran reliably and quite quickly, Jacques Laffite improving his times every session, and ended up as a definite contender for points in the middle of the fastest bunch.

Latin smile

Carlos Reutemann had, like Pryce, not been involved in the testing and perversely came out better than Carlos Pace on the grid. One can imagine that his face was almost as surprised as that of everyone else when he wound up the first day of practice sixth quickest. Here he had been shopping about for a Ford-engined ride while the patient floggers at Brabham and at Alfa Romeo had been one by one smoothing out the roughnesses in the BT45 . . . Asked that afternoon about someone called Macdonald and something named RAM, he smiled a slow Latin smile and said, "Who is that? What is that? I never heard of it."

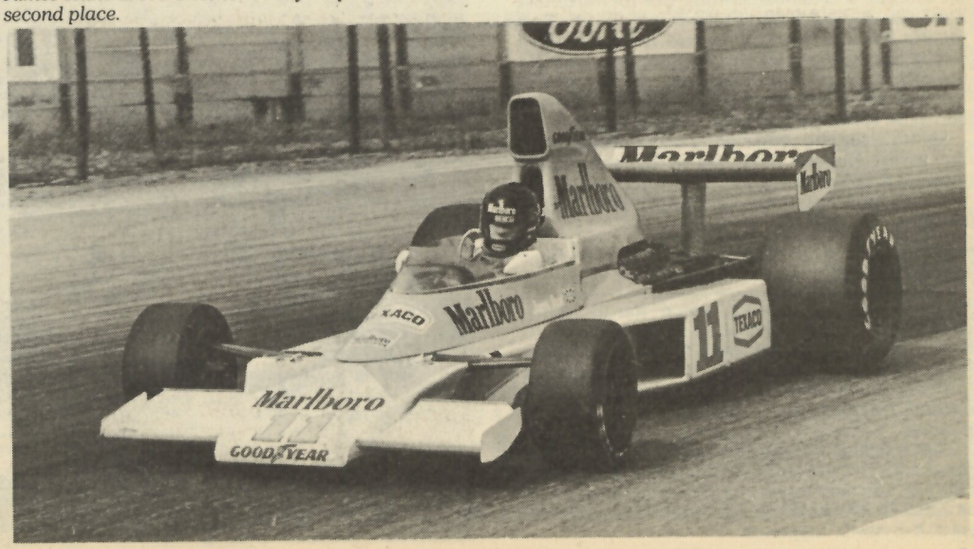
The red Martini cars were ultimately, after a lot of testing, much the same as they had been in Brazil, except that they tended to work this time. The original suspension geometry was retained, as was the original double airbox layout, after trials in both cases with something different. Fuel injection behaviour was better this time, and the cars — thanks to a lot of new titanium in the chassis and some new magnesium castings on the engine — were significantly lighter. The engines sounded clean and appeared powerful, while the chassis looked like handling well; it was a success story.

Except for poor faithful Pace, that is, whose car after performing well in testing would hardly run at all during practice and who was reduced to borrowing Big Carlos's car to do grid times on the first afternoon. There was something else different about Pace's appearance too — his driver's suit, which below an American flag emblem said Môco's name was "Bobby Deerfield." Something to do with a film.

Beautiful

Another success story in the making seemed to be the Vel's Parnelli appearance with Mario Andretti in Africa. Caught in another airfreight delay involving two separate mix-ups, the revised VPJ4B did not arrive at Kyalami until Thursday of test week and could not run until Saturday. Having but "two weeks and three days" to turn a moribund project into a race car from Vel Miletich's decision to come at all, the crew had (for instance) received the new unfitted body panels at 3 am on the very day the car was due at the Los Angeles airport at 7 am! That such hasty work glistened with such beauty was hard to credit, but the elegant white American car was

James Hunt drove another really impressive race in the Marlboro-McLaren but again had to settle for second place.



quite the most beautiful thing in the garages.

The revisions to the car raced last year at Watkins Glen involved among other things a total conversion to coil springs at all four corners, with new geometry. The rearward bodywork also was different, quite USAC-like, the hump over the engine taking over the original Fittipaldi idea of using the driver's helmet to induce air to flow around into a duct squarely behind him. (Later on in practice, a pair of small scoops were added, and for the race an overhead duct was put on.) During its one morning of testing the cooling arrangements proved so inadequate that the engine steamed half its own life away, but subtle revisions to radiator positioning and ducting cured that problem completely.

Chris Amon, who has spent a winter undergoing painful repair of a foot injured far worse than anyone had apparently realized, (including a threat of amputation for gangrene) said that it had been only two weeks since he had been able to try to get back fitness by running. For both him and Mo Nunn's Ensign team the appearance in Africa was very much a testing-of-the-waters; while a brand new Ensign developed from last year's promising design should be ready by Long Beach, Kyalami was entered with the aging 1974 car, painted dark blue and carrying support from John Day Model Cars. To qualify 18th from a field of 25 was far more encouraging a performance than they could have hoped for.

Jacky Ickx turned out to be the quicker Williams driver, by over half a second, from newcomer Michel Leclére, who after doing a lot of testing in the older (ex-Hesketh) car took over a brand new number of the same design. Neither was in fact going very well, and it was interesting to see a reversion to steel coil springs on the cars by the second practice. This was mainly, however, a matter of arriving at a different geometry, and both the designer and the drivers said they were further convinced rubber was better than steel. "The rubber feels smoother," said Ickx. But for the race only Leclère had rubber, and only on the rear.

Alongside Ickx on the 10th row was Brett Lunger, who was starting his association with Surtees in a workmanlike way and finding opportunities to say how fortunate he felt for John's experience. Painted up in Chesterfield cigarette colours, the TS19 drew quite a few admiring comments for both its overall conception and detail workmanship. One could however see reinforcements in the rear suspension as a result of weaknesses shown in testing.

Disappointing and struggling

A disappointing 21st overall was Emerson Fittipaldi's Copersucar Fittipaldi, which was showing nothing like its practice form in Brazil. An experimental elongation of the wheelbase (by moving the rear wheels rearwards in relation to the engine) didn't seem to have any beneficial effect for what Emerson called a "complete lack of grip in all places," and the car was put back to standard again. Practice dramas with engines meant however he could not test the conversion.

John Player Team Lotus, struggling with two new drivers in its still-new cars, were at the very back. The presence of Colin Chapman seemed to be a tonic to the spirits of the team, and all during the test week there was real progress in sorting the difficult type 77 handling. Since Brazil some stiffening had been carried out upon the front of the chassis, a cross-bar uniting the forwardmost bottom wishbone pickups to reduce flex, and also for the Kyalami straight an "old fashioned" tall airbox had been grafted onto the engine cover. At the end of practice the rearward corners of the tabs had begun to break up from radius rod loads, and more stiffening had to be carried out.

Splitting the two JPSs finally was Harald Ertl in the private Hesketh 308B, the ex-Lunger chassis reskinned and with coil spring suspension on all four corners, as well as "Forty-four detail changes."

PRACTICE

After six days of testing, you'd hardly think another two, even under official watches, would be worth much. So many teams had done so much flogging round and round the circuit — Lotus had totted up about seven GP distances — that there couldn't be much left to learn about F1 cars at Kyalami.

That's failing to take into account the innate perversity of these objects. The three and a half hours of officially timed qualifications resulted in as much upset and mystification as if the test week had never happened.

More Lotus problems

Nilsson, having run through the previous week with nothing outstanding in the way of disasters, achieved precisely one timed lap of practice on the first official day. He then appeared in his pit with smoke pouring from the back of the JPS — the rear brakes had somehow seized on, and the frictional heat of dragging them around the circuit had set the pads themselves and the glassfibre scoops aflame. Such was the heat damage to calipers and other components that Gunnar never did get out again that day.

Nor did he manage more than a lap the next day either, when it counted. The untimed 2½ hours in the morning were bedevilled by "the gearbox jumping out" while in the final hour of practice the car came to a halt in the Esses with apparent ignition failure. Poor old Gunnar found himself right at the lonely back of the grid.

Neither did the cars on the 12th row perform well at all. Bob Evans did more laps than his teammate, but was fighting bad handling all the way: "It seems to be ultra sensitive to adjustment," he said, describing the difficulty of tuning away gross oversteer. He also flat-spotted the one set of good front tyres (he particularly liked the construction) he was allotted, and came into the pits with a wheel bearing shot, all on the first day. The second day, after reporting the oversteer had grown worse and worse, he was informed that the back of his chassis was coming apart.

"There's a top-hat section steel beam inside the corner of the tub that is supposed to take the radius rod loads," explained Colin Chapman, "and, well, it just wasn't strong enough. The corners of the tub have split. We're going to graft in new beams with doubled depth." That was an all day job.

Harald Ertl, plagued with troubles in his Hesketh's handling primarily ("The wings are all completely different to my old car") did but 30 laps in the two days and only just managed to beat Nilsson with one of them.

Fittipaldi had just the one day of practice to set up his lowly grid place, for on the second morning as the engine was fired up "it ran for about two seconds and then shut itself off." A new spark box was fitted and the engine restarted; it ran another two seconds and then died. After a further period of mounting perplexity, the Copersucar team set to and changed the motor, finishing it as everyone else was finishing lunch and preparing for the final hour of the second day. Confidently the fresh engine was fired — and it refused to run.

Sometime after the close of practice, the Brazilians reached understanding by trying a fifth new sparkbox borrowed from another team. Now the engine ran strong and clean. It was, they decided, a fault in the original engine's distributor that had blown all four previous sparkboxes. It was understanding that came too late.

Smiles

These were the grossest of the mechanical distresses, but gradually as people filtered into place higher and higher up the grid the frowns shallowed and more and more smiles appeared. One of the best smiles surrounded Jochen Mass' second row placement.

The other McLaren driver hadn't been going very well through the first day, saying that something indefinible was wrong with his car's handling. He did a spin in the morning as if to prove how hard he was driving. (He had a misfire, at one point too, that turned out to be the spark box almost falling from the back of the engine). Next day despite a lot of overnight checking over, and even a spiffy new wet of Titanium springs, the handling wasn't any better and young Jochen was getting visibly distressed about not being able to match the flyers that were pouring readily from the wheels of his teammate James.

"And then all of a sudden one of us stumbled onto the problem. It was so simple — something that didn't cost 20p. No, I'm not going to tell you what it was!" But outsiders gradually evolved a theory that the strip of metal ribbing on the rearward edge of the rear wing wasn't firmly enough fixed and was bowing at high airspeeds. Another three or four pop rivets held it in place and allowed it to do its job of damming up air over the surface of the aerofoil.

As suddenly as that, with time enough for only eight flying laps before the close of the final session, Mass was reaching up to the speeds of Hunt. He wound up on fourth grid spot, alongside Watson.

Not too long after the end of that session, behind the row of garages, the Penske team manager and the McLaren man in charge of Mass' car were standing together. They were gleefully engaged in that verbal jabbing and counter-punching so much a part of Grand Prix life. They were chatting about a scene of a few minutes before in the office of the timekeeper.

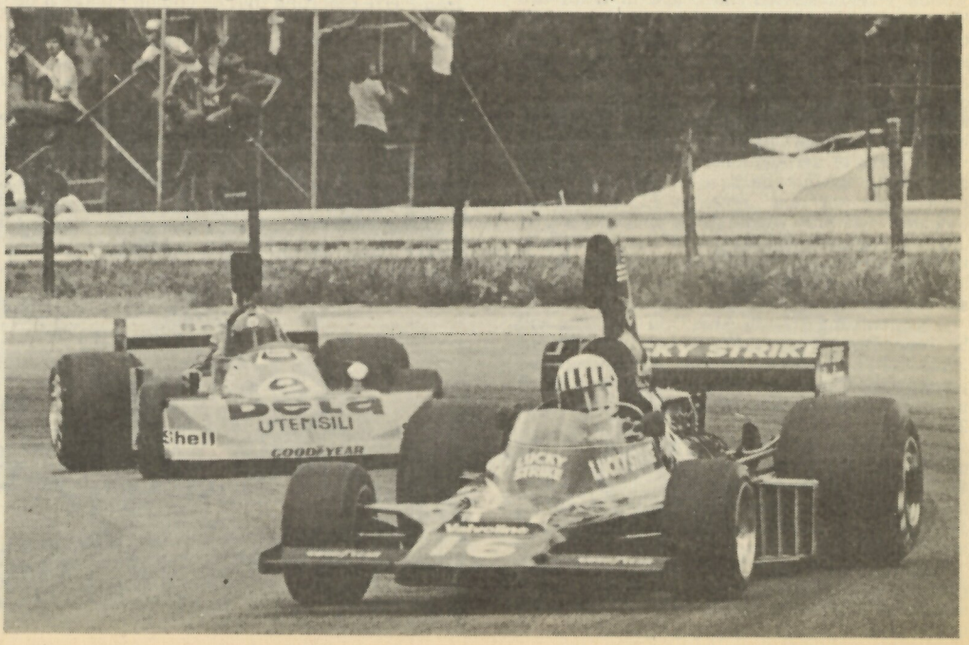
Wrong time?

The grid sheet had come out and shown the Penske third quickest with 16.43 to the McLaren's 16.45. But the Mass manager had trotted along upstairs to see if maybe he couldn't improve his man's prospects a little, and the Watson man had run after him to guard his team's interests. Together they had poured over the official records, and lo-and-behold there is a time for Mass, missed by the official who extracted the best times of the day, at 16.41. McLaren man had with a polite smile pointed this out to the official. The official had, like officials do everywhere, preserved his dignity by refusing to discuss the matter. The two managers had come back downstairs.

Now Penske man is offering a strained but grudgingly admiring smile as he informs his rival that he has kept his eye on him and spotted him running back up the stairs. "You told me you weren't going to press it." McLaren man, face wreathed in the smile of a cat with feathers in its chin fur, comes back with the placating information that he hadn't been able to press it anyway.

"When I got up there again they'd put the times away, wouldn't let me see 'em. Said they'd got the right time in the first place, the grid stands, go away.

Tom Pryce again gave a great performance in the Shadow but suffered a late puncture.



Высококачественная белая офисная бумага КСЕРОКС «Бизнес»

"But I've been thinking anyway that Jochen's better off where he is, behind Niki. Niki's never been known to make a bad start yet!"

Alastair Caldwell's grin was at it's broadest. Heinz Hofer's was fading quietly away.

For it did all seem to depend on James Hunt. The entire story of the eight days of testing and of practice did come down, in simplified but real terms, to the fact that he and his car alone were the mainstay of the Ford challenge to Ferrari.

Niki Lauda's 312T had looked good on the road in practice. It was getting around the circuit with that uncanny visual economy of effort that so marks the Ferrari chassis; if it slides, it's only a little, and if the back steps out it's but a single gentle twitch so smoothly caught that it almost looks deliberate. "In this place," one can almost hear Niki saying to himself, "a racing car should put its back wheels out and so I will put out my back wheels, just so."

But that was visual. Approach Niki half way through practice without having beavered the state of the lap times, and try to tell him how smooth and steady his car looks, how it sits four square on the road without the slightest wiggle under either braking or acceleration, how it appears to you to be the only truly successful chassis at Kyalami, and he would have bitten off your head with short bitter words. "It's shit." His face hunched forwards between his shoulders, his teeth clamping his lower lip. "It's sliding too much." He honestly looked worried.

Hunt did not look worried. The only time Lauda had been able to head him was on the morning of the second day, when no official times were taken and everyone was supposed to be setting up the cars on full tanks. Lauda, according to hand-timing in the pits, was quickest then, improving on his previous day's effort with 1m 16.4s. Hunt then was caught at 16.7s. The pair of them were still, even in these conditions, well clear of anyone else: Brambilla at 16.9s, Laffite at 17.1s, and Reutemann, Watson and Peterson at 17.2s were merely the background to their personal duel.

Early on in the final hour on Thursday afternoon Hunt officially did 16.10s. There seemed to be nothing further to do, for Lauda was only doing 16.6s', and James came in and idled around the pits while McLarens poured over Mass' handling problem. Warily Teddy Mayer kept his eyes on Lauda's times, however, and when the Ferrari suddenly got down to 16.2s he bundled James back into his helmet. With mere minutes to go in the session Lauda and Hunt were flogging around the circuit within sight of each other, both trying their utmost. James could not in fact repeat his 16.1s, something to do, he felt, with a different set of rear tyres the diameters of which weren't a perfect match, but in the end it didn't matter. As the chequered flag came out Niki hadn't improved either. McLaren were on pole for the second time in the new year.

Idle mischief

With Friday kept free for race preparation, there was time for idle hands to get into mischief. A group of official persons met together behind a locked gate and discussed the matter of F1 rules — specifically the one governing heights of wings above "the lowest part of the chassis". They became disturbed that perhaps the skirtings hanging below some of the cars made the wings too high, and the result was that the managers of Penske and McLaren decided to strip the skirts from their cars.

The manager of Ferrari, Audetto, as a good, alert manager should, immediately said that if Hunt's McLaren was "illegal" then it should be taken off pole . . .

In fact Hunt retained his practice time, but by his own choice the grid was altered. At Kyalami the normal pole position is to the left, the outside line down to Crowthorne corner, but James was granted the perogative of deciding which side he preferred and he chose the pits side. It was the best he could do to give his car every chance of out-dragging the Ferrari into the apex of the turn, but he in fact had no illusions about Fords v Ferraris in drag races. "Niki doesn't have to get a good start, all he has to do is get it rolling and plant his foot — the torque does the rest."

As he came onto the dummy grid in the place actually assigned to Lauda, and as Lauda came alongside in what looked like pole, Watson and Mass properly came into reversed position behind; however Brambilla and Depailler apparently didn't get the message and came into the places assigned on the original grid sheet. Thus it looked, as they waited there, as if both the little controversies of practice had been resolved into altered grid positions. It was a case of real life chancing to match abstract regulation. In retrospect, it seemes to have had an effect on the race.

Jacky Ickx holds off Jarier and Fittipaldi who both had quiet weekends.

Ferrari flutters

The Ferrari team, all the while, were not cool calm or collected. During the very brief, 20-minutes long morning warm-up session (the length of time requested by the Constructors themselves) Lauda's engine had run badly. It was misfiring at anything over 10,000 rpm and as the minutes ticked away the Italian mechanics first attacked the ignition system. The only thing they could really do was replace things quickly, and they slapped on a new distributor with settings arrived at almost by guess. But that didn't work, the engine still stuttered at the top end, and then the flag came out.

There were two courses for Ferrari to follow, and they followed both. They replaced the metering unit on Niki's race car, and also they race-prepared the spare chassis (originally intended to be Regazzoni's race car). It was brought out into the pits before the race and warmed up alongside the other two. Ears cupped, the mechanics could only listen to Lauda's engine as he rasped away around his single pre-race warm up lap and wait to see if he would dive back in among their legs or stop in his grid position.

It was all right. The engine now pulled cleanly to twelve thousand and beyond, and everyone relaxed as much as one can relax a couple of minutes before the start of a GP. Perhaps Niki, sitting there gazing down over the crest of the hill toward Crowthorne at the bottom, shook his shoulder muscles like a diver on a board. He really shouldn't have much to worry about any more . . .

The starting procedure in use today was to drive around one more lap and pause for ten seconds in grid positions again, slightly farther back along the straight to get everyone behind the timing line in front of the new timing tower; the start was given not by flag but by green light. That part of it worked fine. All 25 engines roistering lustily together in the thin Highveldt air, the field moved into position on the brink.

Nilsson's Lotus on fire after just one lap of practice.

RACE

The fledgling South African Broadcasting Corporation had splendid coverage of the start which was replayed twice again that evening. The videotape shows the pack straining at the leash, waiting for the precise instant of the green light's first flash. It shows, over in echelon to the left behind Mass, directly in line behind Lauda, the orange nose of Brambilla's March lifting into the air a good second before any other car moves — and then it shows the nose dipping again as Vittorio realizes he's jumped the start just a bit too flagrantly! But he's nevertheless rolling, and Mass is rolling too as the pair of back wheels on the front row first begin to twitch.

Hunt and Lauda both got excellently clean, precise starts upon the green light, but James was fractionally too eager and following the initial

Jody Scheckter working hard to keep the Tyrrell in contention.

Высококачественная белая офисная бумага КСЕРОКС «Бизнес»

surge forward his wheels lost traction. Niki was forging smoothly ahead as the pack came up by the pits, with Mass's chisle nosepiece thrusting into the developing gap to his right and Brambilla's round one reaching up toward his left. As Hunt lagged, Depailler approached him on the right. Watson, himself having slightly fluffed the start, was lagging behind Hunt as Peterson went through squarely behind Mass.

Exciting as a real-life grid start is, you never quite realize the full terror of the thing until you see it on a screen later. The tape of this one was shocking.

The screen was crammed from edge to edge with Formula One cars weaving, wiggling and veering from side to side, fat black wheels and sharp finny noses darting among each other with scant inches of clearance as drivers went, quicker than thought, for fleeting openings. Tall airboxes were chopping back and forth behind each other like the teeth of a mowing machine, and gritty brown dust was pluming up in the background, and over on the far outside verge Reutemann's red Brabham was completely off the racing surface fishtailing along in the grit in a do-or-die effort to get around Regazzoni and Pryce.

As the desperate assault piled into Crowthorne, Lauda still knifing in just ahead of everyone, Depailler hauled his Tyrrell as far over to the inside of Hunt as he could and held full power as long as he possibly could dare. Almost too long; as he stamped the brake pedal the back wheels locked. The blue 007 whipped into a vicious oscillation, wheels and wing slashing from side to side, and the McLaren alongside escaped by the thickness of an endplate. Hunt arrived into the apex still fourth, with Brambilla just third from Mass and Lauda powering away in the lead. Depailler somehow caught up with his car and was fifth, while Reutemann on the outside managed to retain the racing surface still pointed the right way and without collecting anyone else. The entire chaotic charge, a picture of rioting anarchy, at last came under the discipline of the laws of cornering physics and funnelled into order into the bend.

All but two of them. Michel Leclere and Ian Scheckter in the rearward half of the pack arrived together, Jody's brother just to the inside; the new Williams leapt into the air over the left front wheel of the Tyrrell and then went into a spin across through the midst of the pack to the inside verge, somehow it missed collecting any other car, and Michel was able to gather himself up and drive away again. Ian though was at rest in the dust of the outside verge, left front suspension bent; all he could do was clamber out and help the marshals shove the car farther along away from further harm. Then, helmet off to reveal a face devoid of its customary good cheer, he could only sit there waiting for the end of the race — and hoping idly, as he admitted later, that perhaps something would go wrong with Leclere's car so he would coast to a stop where he could get at him!

As the first lap hurtled up around the arc before the pits it was still the Ferrari first, leading a file of screaming machines sharply across to the inside next to the pits wall at 150, 160, 170 mph. Mass was still second and Brambilla third as they plunged down the hill, but nearing the braking area Hunt pulled over toward the inside to challenge the March. But Brambilla was himself challenging Mass. The next few inches of videotape still has the power to stop hearts.

Brambilla bother

Vittorio chopped down toward the apex in one long straight diagonal, straight across the nose of Hunt who veered two wheels onto the inside verge to avoid him. It could have ended right there for both men, but McLaren nose missed March tail, and Brambilla succeeded in forcing himself underneath Mass at the apex and scratched through into second place.

A couple of corners later Jochen with a little wave of prudence let James through into third; let somebody else deal with this! So as the file hurtled across the line for the second time it was Lauda, Brambilla, Hunt and Mass. The line however wasn't as finely ordered as the first time, for the Ferrari now had a cushion of almost two and a half seconds on the March. As the next couple of laps developed it was obvious that Brambilla, quick on the straight, was holding up everyone behind.

Going onto the brakes for the third time at Crowthorne Hunt stayed in line behind. Fourth time down the hill, though, he whipped over and made a feint up the inside of Brambilla. Once again Vittorio protected himself with savage determination in a long straight diagonal into the apex, *slash!* This, the well bred young Englishman might well have thought to himself, was a little like Lord Greystoke mixing it up with Attila the Hun!

Chris Amon was undoubtedly one of the stars of the race in the Ensign challenging for sixth place at one stage.

But there was nothing to do but to press the attack, and coming off Leeukop corner up onto the straight the next time with wheels just on the perfect edge of traction and engine driving hard through fifth gear into sixth the McLaren flashed by the pits going faster than ever before. Still hard on the power, a little earlier than before, James veered over to the right once again and this time came up absolutely alongside. Perfectly matched, the two went onto the brakes for Crowthorne for the fifth time – and the Italian gave in. "I think he may have felt just a tiny bit badly about the lap before," James smiled with comfortable equanimity afterward, "for I saw him wiggle a finger at me and let me in."

James free

James was now free to see what he could salvage from his botched start. It didn't look like much was salvageable, though. The gap which on that exciting fifth lap was six seconds from Ferrari to March was on the seventh lap about seven seconds from Ferrari to McLaren, and as the laps ticked away, both drivers free now to go at their hardest, the gap expanded slowly but steadily. Having done what remained the best lap as early as the sixth lap, at 1m 17.93, before coming around among backmarkers, Lauda must have felt as surely as any racing driver can ever feel until the finish line comes by beneath him that the race was his.

Hunt, feeling understeer now at this stage of the race with nearly full tanks, and with intermittent puffs of smoke coming from an oil weep somewhere at the rear onto the exhaust pipes, could only hope that perhaps, in the reverse of the Brazilian result, bad luck might strike the Ferrari this time.

Meanwhile the focus of attention shifted to the happenings behind those ominous thin puffs of oil smoke. Mass had taken up the Brambilla problem again, and found that if Vittorio had had a small twinge of conscience about the way he had treated Hunt it had quite cleared by the time Jochen was ready to try the same manoeuvre. With a preliminary feint out of the slipstream on lap eight, Jochen did it for real on lap nine – and Vittorio responded with another lurid swing of the axe. This time, though, as he stomped on the brakes the March's front wheels locked up in a great burst of smoke, and it arrived into the Crowthorne entry just a bit faster than the suffering rubber could cope with. On ahead of the McLaren's bows it went, scratching around the corner on the edges of the gravel at the outside of the line, and Mass simply drove tidily through on the inside. Virtue triumphant! Then he pulled away almost as rapidly as James had done.

Peterson out

Brambilla, his "front tyres having gone off", thereafter slipped down through the pack reluctantly but inevitably. Peterson had come past Depailler into fifth right behind his teammate, and begun trying to get by, but the Frenchman was trying to fight back and with 15 laps down he brought the Tyrrell up alongside into Crowthorne. But the problem of the first lap was still with him, the back brakes were adjusted to come on too sharply, and Patrick found a waggle turning this time into a spin. Ronnie tried to go round the outside, but the Tyrrell's wheel caught the blue March a hefty blow and smashed its right rear upright casting at the bottom. Wing tweaked too, Superswede could only sit facing the oncoming pack and then, wheel leaning crazily, drive on a little way to park out of further danger.

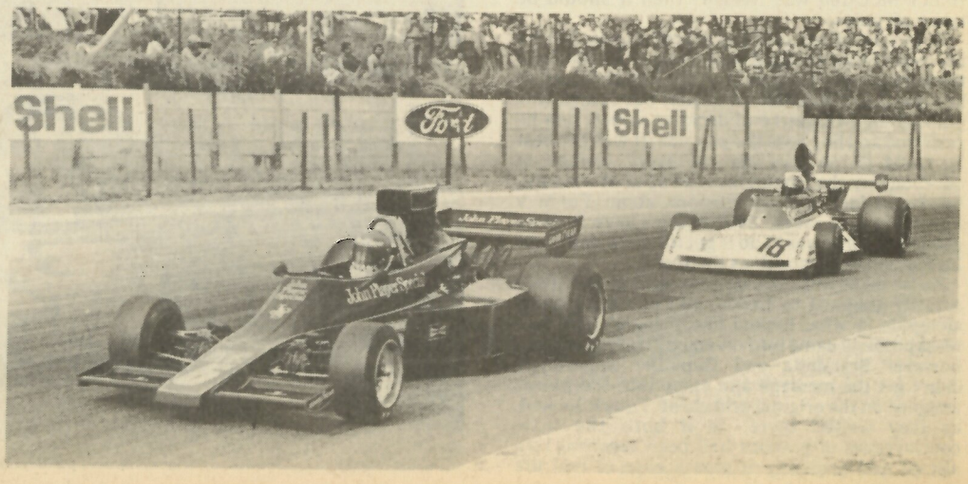
Tom Pryce, up excellently from the fourth row, thus found himself next in line, and he too overtook Brambilla and once clear pulled away in a lonely fourth. Regazzoni came up next, with Jody Scheckter hanging on in his wake.

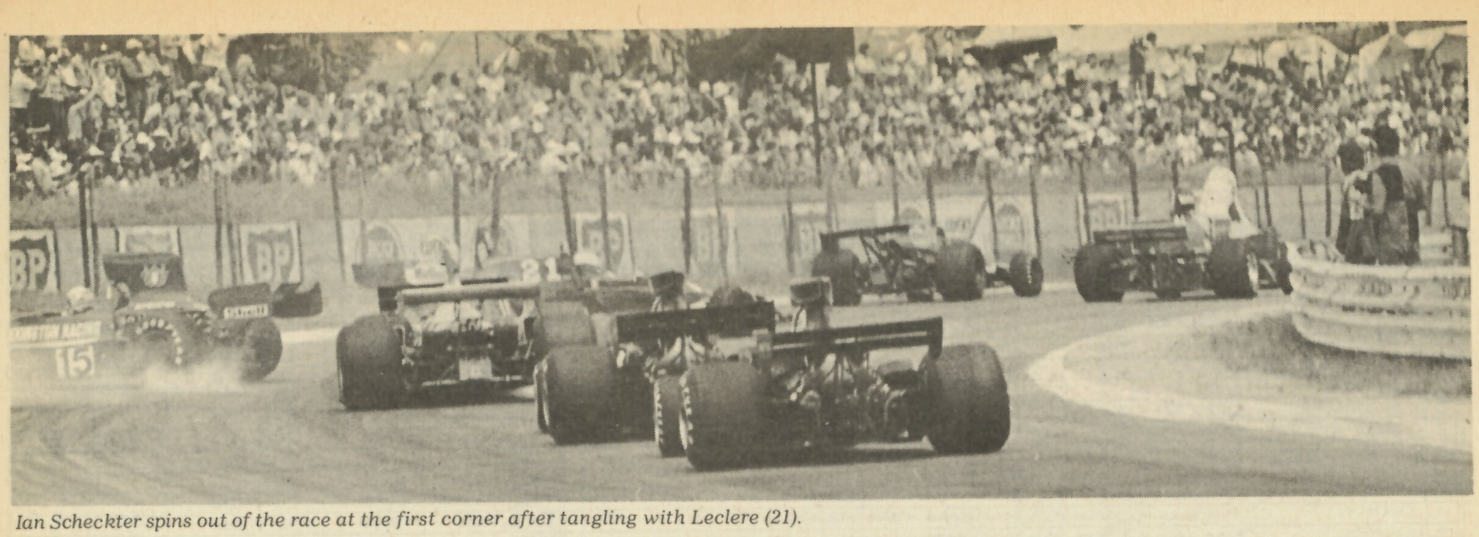
This was a race of a great deal of scratching and scrambling. Everyone was having a full share of racing this day, and there was hardly a dull moment anywhere down the line. As it all developed certain events assumed significance.

Both Brabhams were smoking a little, and spewing out oil a lot. Behind Reutemann as he charged along Andretti and Watson were rapidly going dingy brown, and behind Pace the Ligier of Laffite was absolutely smeared with wet, streaming oil streaks. The track too was rapidly going slippery.

Both Brabham drivers hung on until all the oil was gone. Reutemann came in first to report low pressure, doing then another two laps before retiring for good ("Good!" is what everyone else

Evans and Lunger had a good dice in the later stages of the race, Lunger recovering from a poor start (wrong gear) and an early misfire.





Ian Scheckter spins out of the race at the first corner after tangling with Leclere (21).

said.) Pace's Alfa lasted longer, but he too had to shut it off eventually. The two BT45s had been as high as seventh and ninth before retiring, however, which was at least an encouraging improvement in their basic performance.

Jarier, never happy throughout the race meeting, had to drop out when somehow a large hard object left a "brick shaped" ding in his right side radiator cowling, from which the water leaked away. Poor Nilsson, with even drearier experiences as memories from his GP debut, came in to the Lotus pits after 17 laps with the engine steaming its water away. The clutch had been slipping, and after futile attempts at finding friction Gunnar was retired.

Pryce's disappointment

Not long thereafter it was Pryce's turn for disappointment, as the Shadow picked up a puncture and had to come in for a new right rear tyre. The new one created some oversteer, which combined with a tendency for the front brakes to lock gave Tom no joy for the rest of the day.

Andretti, as high as eighth place, had something go wrong with his engine before about quarter distance and gradually slipped back behind Watson. The Penske driver, his bad start having dropped him to 13th from third during the first lap, had recovered as well as he could but there was oversteer caused, it appeared, from incorrectly set tyre pressures and also his rear brakes, like Depailler's, were giving too much. Yet he pressed the attack on the Parnelli, and early on in the race came up to the inside at Crowthorne. It was a manoeuvre that when tried against many drivers would have resulted in a gained position, but Andretti, many hard years of USAC short-track dicing behind him, refused to be intimidated. He held his radius, pinching Watson inside him, and wheel to wheel a hand's width apart they scratched around the whole corner and on to Barbeque, where Mario darted ahead again. It was another several laps before his engine sounding flat and lifeless at low revs, he had to let the Penske go ahead for keeps.

In turn Laffite was able to vanquish Watson, and was shortly thereafter engaged in a furious pursuit of Brambilla for what was now seventh place. His front brakes locking up occasionally, he couldn't do the job in the corners but Jacques eventually got a special tow up the straight and by the pits veered out alongside. Ligier side by side with March, a nose ahead perhaps, the two plunged down the hill – and exactly then the Matra blew up. "Eet make a 'orrible noise. Da-da-da-da-dah, like zat, and I sweetch off queekly." The huge plume of white smoke suggested a broken piston.

So Vittorio had a respite, but toward the end of the race he was coming under attack from Watson. Closer and closer came Penske to March, and as the final laps approached so too did the race for the lead.

The gap closes

For it had in fact become a race for the lead again. Once as much as ten seconds or more ahead of Hunt, Lauda had begun to feel a deficiency in his car from bout the 20th lap. Granted the track was oily, but changing line onto drier portions – as was Hunt behind and a few others, but not everyone seemed to catch on – didn't settle the Ferrari. It felt to Niki like something he's had before on his car, as if "a shock absorber went soft". The red car now stepping its tail out more than a Ferrari should do, it began to very gradually lose its cushion to the McLaren.

The handling going more neutral with time, and the oil leak having come to nothing. Hunt saw the gap as signalled from the pits shrinking back toward six seconds and then under six. Suddenly it was under four, and now with the last dozen laps in hand both men were trying their hardest. For several minutes then the gap was virtually steady. Three point eight, it read with seven laps to go, and again it was 3.8s. With five to go it was shrunk slightly to 3.6s, but next time it was 3.8s again. Minus three laps it was 3.6s, and as Hunt, powering up out of Leeukop onto the straight, watched the Ferrari disappearing into the kink before the pits he had resigned himself to second place by that amount.

But success in motor racing hangs by so many threads. Like the threads of the rear suspension bolt the week before that had halted the Ferrari test programme with a buckled rear cross beam. And now the threads of the carcase of Niki's left rear tyre were cut by something.

Just when it actually happened cannot ever be established. Some observers believe they saw the tyre going soft much earlier; the Goodyear technicians, saying "If that tyre was cut that early we are very, very proud of that tyre!" believe it could not have happened more than two or three laps from the finish. It might not even have become bad until the cool-off lap. But the Ferrari, with just two laps left ahead of it, was suddenly below three seconds from the McLaren. All around that next to last lap Hunt seemed to gain, and with one lap to go the distance between them was 2.7 seconds.

Both cars had tows at this moment. Watson, who on the previous round had been abruptly presented with fifth place when Brambilla veered off into the pits to take on fuel, was cutting the air for Lauda. Stuck, a lap farther behind, was between Lauda and Hunt. So that was equal, and so was the ease with which Ferrari and McLaren overtook and went into the last lap.

Only Watson split them as, sliding up around Leeukop, the gap was 1.1 seconds. Hard on its 12 cylinder power, the Ferrari accelerated to the kink. Going up through it's close ratio gearbox, and with the added advantage of it's tow from the Penske, the McLaren was nevertheless bested. Softening tyre or no softening tyre, Ferraris outdrag Fords these days in F1, and as the trio of cars whisked up over the finish line the gap covering them was 1.3 seconds.

It was not until Crowthorne corner that Hunt caught up with the slowing Lauda; then he pulled alongside as they drove away into Barbeque and exchanged a jaunty salute. The World Champion, as he headed for his second champagne-spraying party of the new year, had the comfort of thrice the points of his (at this stage, anyway) most threatening rival. But the expression on James' face after he took off his helmet was of quiet contentment, and he grinned often. It was a grin that promised that it's a long way still to the end of the season and if Niki Lauda thinks he can relax he'd best keep a sharp watch in his mirrors.

Mighty Amon

Andretti's weakening engine was gradually delivering him into the clutches of Chris Amon, who was performing wonders with the aged Ensign. Complaining of being unfit or not, Chrissy had already disposed of the Depailler Tyrrell and at seven eighths distance was gaining on the Parnelli. He was actually making a move to go inside under braking for Crowthorne when he himself was attacked by Emerson Fittipaldi. The Brazilian, finding after his curtailed practice (on race morning he got only a few laps before the gearbox seized) that the car on its regular wheelbase was handling well enough but was still slow on the straight, had relentlessly moved forward from his rearward starting position. When Lauda and then Hunt came round to lap him Emerson stayed with them as long as he could, and now on lap 71 as Amon reached Andretti, Fittipaldi had reached them both. Three abreast across the track they went into the corner, and while the Ensign didn't manage to overtake, the Copersucar overtook them both. In the position which would have been sixth at the end, Fittipaldi went away around the next few corners — but at Clubhouse the engine blew up!

The Ensign, oversteering all the way and bringing its driver frankly to the end of his endurance, did not get any farther with the Parnelli and then two laps from the end, started to run out of fuel anyway. A quick stop for more dropped Amon to fourteenth.

The disappearance of Reggazoni through engine failure after his pursuit by Scheckter plus the refuelling stop of Brambilla, moved the Penske and the Parnelli both into the points.

Another solid performance from Jochen Mass gave him his second successive point scoring place.

Высококачественная белая офисная бумага KLEPORC «БИЗНЕС»

SOUTH AFRICAN GRAND PRIX. DATE **MAR. 6. 1976** CIRCUIT **KYALAMI**

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND 2 **LENGTH** 78 **laps of** 2.55 **mile circuit.** 198.90 **miles**

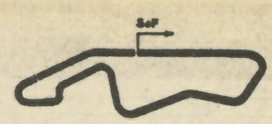
WEATHER WARM. SUNNY. **No. of STARTERS** 25 **FINISHERS** 16

WINNER N. LAUDA **in** FERRARI 312T **av. speed** 116.58 **mph**

FASTEST LAP N. LAUDA **in** FERRARI 312T **No.** 1 **on lap** 6 **in** 1 **min.** 17.94 **sec.** 117.72 **mph**

EXISTING LAP RECORD E. FITTIPALDI **in** JPS-FORD 72D **in** 1 **min.** 17.10 **sec.** 119.07 **mph**

PREVIOUS YEAR'S RESULT J. SCHECKTER **in** TYRRELL-FORD 007 **at** 115.51 **mph**



ENTRIES

NO	DRIVER	CAR	ENTRANT	FUEL/OIL CONTR	TYRE	CHASSIS	ENGINE	
1	N. LAUDA	FERRARI 312T	S.p.a. FERRARI S.E.F.A.C.	AGIP AGIP	GOOD	312T 023	Type 312 B	
2	C. REGAZZONI	FERRARI 312T	S.p.a. FERRARI S.E.F.A.C.	AGIP AGIP	GOOD	312T 024	Type 312 B	
2T	C. REGAZZONI	FERRARI 312T	S.p.a. FERRARI S.E.F.A.C.	AGIP AGIP	GOOD	312T 022	Type 312 B	RACE CAR.
3	J. SCHECKTER	TYRRELL-FORD 007	ELF TEAM TYRRELL	ELF ELF	GOOD	007/6	DFV 196	
4	P. DEPAILLER	TYRRELL-FORD 007	ELF TEAM TYRRELL	ELF ELF	GOOD	007/4	DFV 232	
5	B. EVANS	JPS-77	JOHN PLAYER TEAM LOTUS	DUCKHAMS –	GOOD	JPS 12 (77-2)	DFV 238	
6	G. NILSSON	JPS-77	JOHN PLAYER TEAM LOTUS	DUCKHAMS –	GOOD	JPS 11 (77-1)	DFV 235	
7	C. REUTEMANN	MARTINI-BRABHAM-ALFA	MARTINI RACING	FINA FINA	GOOD	BT 45-2	Alfa flat-12	ALSO PRACTISED BY PACE AS No 8.
8	C. PACE	MARTINI-BRABHAM-ALFA	MARTINI RACING	FINA FINA	GOOD	BT 45-1	Alfa flat-12	
9	V. BRAMBILLA	MARCH 761	BETA TEAM MARCH	SHELL SHELL	GOOD	761-1	DFV 117	
10	R. PETERSON	MARCH 761	BETA TEAM MARCH	SHELL SHELL	GOOD	761-3	DFV 195	
11	J. HUNT	MARLBORO-McLAREN M23	MARLBORO TEAM McLAREN	TEXACO HAVOLINE	GOOD	M 23/8	DFV 060	
12	J. MASS	MARLBORO-McLAREN M23	MARLBORO TEAM McLAREN	TEXACO HAVOLINE	GOOD	M 23/6	DFV 072	
15	I. SCHECKTER	TYRRELL-FORD 007	LEXINGTON RACING	SHELL SHELL	GOOD	007/1	DFV 131	
16	T. PRYCE	SHADOW-FORD DN5	SHADOW RACING	– VALVOLINE	GOOD	DN5-2A (6)	DFV 076	
17	J-P. JARIER	SHADOW-FORD DN5	SHADOW RACING	– VALVOLINE	GOOD	DN5-1A (4)	DFV 136	
18	B. LUNGER	CHESTERFIELD-SURTEES TS19	TEAM SURTEES	SHELL SHELL	GOOD	TS 19-01	DFV 068	NEW CAR.
20	J. ICKX	WILLIAMS FW	FRANK WILLIAMS RACING CARS	FINA FINA	GOOD	FW 05-1	DFV 221	
21	M. LECLÈRE	WILLIAMS FW	FRANK WILLIAMS RACING CARS	FINA FINA	GOOD	FW 05-2	DFV 225	NEW CAR.
22	C. AMON	ENSIGN-FORD N174	TEAM ENSIGN	– VALVOLINE	GOOD	MN-02	DFV 163	
24	H. ERTL	HESKETH 308B	HESKETH RACING	SHELL SHELL	GOOD	308-3	DFV 184	REBUILT CAR.
26	J. LAFFITE	GITANES-LIGIER-MATRA	LIGIER GITANES	SHELL SHELL	GOOD	JS 5-01	Type MS.	
27	M. ANDRETTI	PARNELLI VPJ-4B	VEL'S PARNELLI JONES RACING	VALVOLINE	GOOD	VPJ-4B-002	DFV 189	REVISED CAR.
28	J. WATSON	PENSKE PC-3	CITIBANK TEAM PENSKE	SUNOCO –	GOOD	PC3-002	–	
28T	J. WATSON	PENSKE PC-3	CITIBANK TEAM PENSKE	SUNOCO –	GOOD	PC3-001	DFV 226	RACE CAR.
30	E. FITTIPALDI	COPERSUCAR-FITTIPALDI FD	COPERSUCAR-FITTIPALDI	– –	GOOD	FD 04-1	DFV 193	
34	H. STUCK	MARCH 761	MARCH 761	– –	GOOD	761-2	DFV 084	

RESULTS

POS	NO	DRIVER	CAR	LAPS	TIME	SPEED	BRAKES	DAMPERS	GEARBOX	PLUGS	INJECTION	ELECS.
1	1	N. LAUDA	FERRARI 312T	78	1hr. 42m. 18.4s.	116.58 mph.	LOCK FER	KONI	FERRARI 312 TRANS.	CHAMPION	LUCAS	MARELLI DINOPLEX
2	11	J. HUNT	MARLBORO-McLAREN M23	78	1hr. 42m. 19.7s.		LOCK FER	KONI	HEW FG 400/6	CHAMPION	LUCAS	LUCAS
3	12	J. MASS	MARLBORO-McLAREN M23	78	1hr. 43m. 04.3s.		LOCK FER	KONI	HEW FG 400/6	CHAMPION	LUCAS	LUCAS
4	3	J. SCHECKTER	TYRRELL-FORD 007	78	1hr. 43m. 26.8s.		LOCK FER	ARM	HEW FG 400	CHAMPION	LUCAS	LUCAS
5	28	J. WATSON	PENSKE PC-3	77			LOCK FER	KONI	HEW FGA 400	CHAMPION	LUCAS	LUCAS
6	27	M. ANDRETTI	PARNELLI VPJ-4B	77			LOCK FER	KONI	HEW FG 400	CHAMPION	LUCAS	LUCAS
7	16	T. PRYCE	SHADOW-FORD DN5	77			LOCK FER	ARM	HEW TL 200	CHAMPION	LUCAS	LUCAS
8	9	V. BRAMBILLA	MARCH 761	77			LOCK FER	KONI	HEW FG 400	CHAMPION	LUCAS	LUCAS
9	4	P. DEPAILLER	TYRRELL-FORD 007	77			LOCK FER	ARM	HEW FG 400	CHAMPION	LUCAS	LUCAS
10	5	B. EVANS	JPS-77	77			LOCK LOTUS FER	KONI	HEW FG 400	CHAMPION	LUCAS	LUCAS
11	18	B. LUNGER	CHESTERFIELD-SURTEES TS 19	77			LOCK FER	KONI	HEW FGA 400	CHAMPION	LUCAS	LUCAS
12	34	H. STUCK	MARCH 761	76			LOCK FER	KONI	HEW FG 400	CHAMPION	LUCAS	LUCAS
13	21	M. LECLÈRE	WILLIAMS FW	76			LOCK FER	KONI	HEW FGA 400	CHAMPION	LUCAS	LUCAS
14	22	C. AMON	ENSIGN-FORD N174	76			LOCK FER	KONI	HEW FGA 400	CHAMPION	LUCAS	LUCAS
15	24	H. ERTL	HESKETH 308B	74			LOCK FER	ARM	HEW FGA 400	CHAMPION	LUCAS	LUCAS
16	20	J. ICKX	WILLIAMS FW	73			LOCK FER	KONI	HEW FGA 400	CHAMPION	LUCAS	LUCAS
17	30	E. FITTIPALDI	COPERSUCAR-FITTIPALDI FD	70	NOT RUNNING AT FINISH.		LOCK FER	KONI	HEW FGA 400	CHAMPION	LUCAS	LUCAS

RETIREMENTS

NO.	DRIVER	LAPS	REASON
15	I. SCHECKTER	0	SHUNT WITH LECLERE.
10	R. PETERSON	15	SHUNT WITH DEPAILLER.
7	C. REUTEMANN	16	ENGINE.
6	G. NILSSON	18	CLUTCH.
8	C. PACE	22	ENGINE.
17	J-P. JARIER	28	RADIATOR DAMAGE.
26	J. LAFFITE	49	ENGINE.
2	C. REGAZZONI	52	ENGINE.
30	E. FITTIPALDI	70	ENGINE.

CHAMPIONSHIP POINTS

DRIVERS

N. LAUDA	18
P. DEPAILLER	6
J. HUNT	6
J. MASS	5
J. SCHECKTER	5
T. PRYCE	4
H. STUCK	3
J. WATSON	2
M. ANDRETTI	1

MANUFACTURERS

FERRARI	18
TYRRELL-FORD	9
McLAREN-FORD	7
SHADOW-FORD	4
MARCH-FORD	3
PENSKE-FORD	2
PARNELLI-FORD	1

DATE WED. a.m. 3 MARCH WEATHER OVERCAST. MILD. BREEZY.

PRACTICE 1

11	J. HUNT	1m. 16.60s.
1	N. LAUDA	1m. 16.93s.
9	V. BRAMBILLA	1m. 17.11s.
17	J-P. JARIER	1m. 17.35s.
16	T. PRYCE	1m. 17.39s.
10	R. PETERSON	1m. 17.57s.
12	J. MASS	1m. 17.61s.
2	C. REGAZZONI	1m. 17.71s.
7	C. REUTEMANN	1m. 17.84s.
4	P. DEPAILLER	1m. 17.89s.
15	I. SCHECKTER	1m. 17.91s.
28	J. WATSON	1m. 18.05s.
26	J. LAFFITE	1m. 18.06s.
3	J. SCHECKTER	1m. 18.16s.
30	E. FITTIPALDI	1m. 18.40s.
22	C. AMON	1m. 18.55s.
27	M. ANDRETTI	1m. 18.78s.
21	M. LECLÈRE	1m. 19.26s.
20	J. ICKX	1m. 19.34s.
34	H. STUCK	1m. 19.39s.
18	B. LUNGER	1m. 19.40s.
5	B. EVANS	1m. 19.56s.
24	H. ERTL	1m. 22.58s.
8	C. PACE	1m. 57.25s.
6	G. NILSSON	2m. 25.48s.

DATE WED. p.m. 3 MARCH WEATHER SUNNY. WARM.

PRACTICE 2

11	J. HUNT	1m. 16.59s.
1	N. LAUDA	1m. 16.90s.
3	J. SCHECKTER	1m. 17.18s.
4	P. DEPAILLER	1m. 17.18s.
7	C. REUTEMANN	1m. 17.21s.
2	C. REGAZZONI	1m. 17.35s.
16	T. PRYCE	1m. 17.41s.
9	V. BRAMBILLA	1m. 17.50s.
28	J. WATSON	1m. 17.54s.
17	J-P. JARIER	1m. 17.55s.
8	C. PACE	1m. 17.67s.
26	J. LAFFITE	1m. 17.72s.
12	J. MASS	1m. 17.91s.
10	R. PETERSON	1m. 17.97s.
15	I. SCHECKTER	1m. 17.98s.
27	M. ANDRETTI	1m. 18.25s.
22	C. AMON	1m. 18.48s.
18	B. LUNGER	1m. 18.50s.
21	M. LECLÈRE	1m. 18.82s.
30	E. FITTIPALDI	1m. 18.84s.
5	B. EVANS	1m. 19.35s.
20	J. ICKX	1m. 19.51s.
34	H. STUCK	1m. 19.83s.
24	H. ERTL	1m. 22.11s.

DATE THUR p.m. 4 MARCH WEATHER PARTLY SUNNY. WARM.

PRACTICE 3

11	J. HUNT	1m. 16.10s.
1	N. LAUDA	1m. 16.20s.
28	J. WATSON	1m. 16.43s.
12	J. MASS	1m. 16.45s.
9	V. BRAMBILLA	1m. 16.64s.
4	P. DEPAILLER	1m. 16.77s.
16	T. PRYCE	1m. 16.84s.
26	J. LAFFITE	1m. 16.88s.
2	C. REGAZZONI	1m. 16.94s.
10	R. PETERSON	1m. 17.03s.
7	C. REUTEMANN	1m. 17.09s.
27	M. ANDRETTI	1m. 17.25s.
8	C. PACE	1m. 17.26s.
3	J. SCHECKTER	1m. 17.30s.
15	I. SCHECKTER	1m. 17.40s.
34	H. STUCK	1m. 17.44s.
17	J-P. JARIER	1m. 17.46s.
22	C. AMON	1m. 17.73s.
20	J. ICKX	1m. 18.13s.
18	B. LUNGER	1m. 18.36s.
21	M. LECLÈRE	1m. 18.86s.
5	B. EVANS	1m. 19.81s.
24	H. ERTL	1m. 22.13s.
6	G. NILSSON	1m. 22.70s.

STARTING GRID

POLE

1 N. LAUDA 1m. 16.20s.	11 J. HUNT 1m. 16.10s.
12 J. MASS 1m. 16.45s.	28 J. WATSON 1m. 16.43s.
9 V. BRAMBILLA 1m. 16.64s.	4 P. DEPAILLER 1m. 16.77s.
16 T. PRYCE 1m. 16.84s.	26 J. LAFFITE 1m. 16.88s.
2 C. REGAZZONI 1m. 16.94s.	10 R. PETERSON 1m. 17.03s.
7 C. REUTEMANN 1m. 17.09s.	3 J. SCHECKTER 1m. 17.18s.
27 M. ANDRETTI 1m. 17.25s.	8 C. PACE 1m. 17.26s.
17 J-P. JARIER 1m. 17.35s.	15 I. SCHECKTER 1m. 17.40s.
34 H. STUCK 1m. 17.44s.	22 C. AMON 1m. 17.73s.
20 J. ICKX 1m. 18.13s.	18 B. LUNGER 1m. 18.36s.
30 E. FITTIPALDI 1m. 18.40s.	21 M. LECLERE 1m. 18.82s.
5 B. EVANS 1m. 19.35s.	24 H. ERTL 1m. 22.11s.
6 G. NILSSON 1m. 22.70s.	

LAP CHART

AUTOSPORT

GRID ORDER	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36
11 J. HUNT	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
1 N. LAUDA	12	9	9	9	9	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11
28 J. WATSON	9	11	11	11	11	9	9	9	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12
12 J. MASS	11	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16
9 V. BRAMBILLA	4	4	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	16	16	9	9	9	9	9	9	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
4 P. DEPAILLER	10	10	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	9	9	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
16 T. PRYCE	7	7	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9
26 J. LAFFITE	16	16	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	27	27	27	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	26	26	26	26	26
2 C. REGAZZONI	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	28	28	28	27	27	8	27	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	28	28	28	28	28
10 R. PETERSON	27	3	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	27	27	8	8	8	8	8	27	26	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27
7 C. REUTEMANN	26	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	28	28	26	26	26	26	26	26	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22
3 J. SCHECKTER	3	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	8	8	4	22	22	22	22	22	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
27 M. ANDRETTI	28	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	26	26	22	4	4	4	4	4	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
8 C. PACE	20	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	22	22	20	20	20	20	20	20	17	17	17	17	17	17	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
17 J-P. JARIER	34	34	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	22	22	22	20	20	17	17	17	17	17	17	30	30	30	30	30	30	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
15 I. SCHECKTER	17	20	34	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	20	20	20	17	17	30	30	30	30	30	30	34	34	34	34	5	5	34	34	34	34	34	34	34	34	34
34 H. STUCK	5	22	22	34	34	34	34	17	17	17	17	17	17	30	30	6	34	34	34	34	34	5	5	5	5	34	34	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18
22 C. AMON	8	17	17	17	17	17	17	34	6	6	6	30	30	6	6	34	5	5	5	5	5	18	18	18	18	18	18	(17)	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21
20 J. ICKX	22	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	34	34	30	6	6	34	34	5	18	18	18	18	18	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24
18 B. LUNGER	6	5	5	5	30	30	30	30	30	30	34	34	34	5	5	18	(6)	21	21	21	21	(8)	24	24	24	24	24	24								
30 E. FITTIPALDI	30	30	30	30	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	18	18	21	21	24	24	24	24	24														
21 M. LECLÈRE	24	24	24	24	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	(7)	21	24	24	(6)																		
5 B. EVANS	18	18	18	18	24	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	24	(7)																				
24 H. ERTL	21	21	21	21	21	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	7																					
6 G. NILSSON																																				
LAP																																				

GRID ORDER	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78
11 J. HUNT	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
1 N. LAUDA	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11
28 J. WATSON	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12
12 J. MASS	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	28	28	28	
9 V. BRAMBILLA	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	(9)	27	27	
4 P. DEPAILLER	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	(16)	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28				
16 T. PRYCE	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	26	26	26	26	26	28	28	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	16	16	
26 J. LAFFITE	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	28	28	28	28	28	27	27	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	16	16	16	16	9	9	
2 C. REGAZZONI	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	27	27	27	27	27	22	22	(2)	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	16	22	22	(22)	4	4	4	
10 R. PETERSON	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	22	22	22	22	22	30	30	30	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	
7 C. REUTEMANN	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	4	4	4	4	30	4	16	16	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	18	18		
3 J. SCHECKTER	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	30	30	30	30	4	16	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	18	18	18	18	34	34		
27 M. ANDRETTI	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	16	16	16	16	16	5	5	5	34	34	34	34	34	34	34	34	34	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	34	34	34	34	21	21		
8 C. PACE	20	20	20	20	20	20	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	34	34	34	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	34	34	34	34	34	34	34	34	34	21	21	21	21	22	22		
17 J-P. JARIER	5	5	5	5	5	5	34	34	34	34	34	34	34	18	18	18	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	24	24	24	24				
15 I. SCHECKTER	34	34	34	34	34	34	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	(20)	21	21	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	20	20	20					
34 H. STUCK	18	18	18	18	18	18	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	21	24	24	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20								
22 C. AMON	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	24	20	20																										
20 J. ICKX	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24																													

GRANITE CITY PREVIEW

More surprises in store?

Ford, it seems, would like to win the team prize on the Granite City, it obviously makes a change from just an outright win at the very least. This was the explanation given for the appearance of Russell Brookes as the third 'works' entry on the Granite City this weekend. The other two team members, Roger Clark and Ari Vatanen are set for the mutual as well as overall conflict. Roger is at present busily recceing for the Firestone which takes place on the following weekend, while Ari Vatanen is to jet off to Germany immediately after the event for a German Motorsport Conference, taking the Robin Hillyar Safari-bound Escort with him as a show-piece. Roger is expected to return "probably about 10 minutes before the Granite" (or possibly yesterday) and he will have a newly re-shelled "LAR" with which to do battle.

The fourth round of the RAC Championship is based as usual on Aberdeen this weekend and rally HQ is the Treetops Hotel. Scrutineering takes place on Friday at Roy Thompson Ltd on the Great Western Road, the main Chrysler agents, and the session starts at 18.00, going through until 22.00. More convivial pre-event action is a rally forum which is being held in the College of Education Theatre, Hilton, Aberdeen, starting at 19.30 with a film. The panel comprises Tony Fall, Russell Brookes, Andrew Cowan, Brian Culcheth, Will Sparrow and Charles Samson. Ross Finlay will be in the chair. The movies include the Leyland epic "Culcheth Job", plus the films of last year's Scottish Rally, and the 1975 Avon Tour of Britain.

Granite sponsors are the Consolidated Pneumatic Tool Company and the field will be flagged away from the Treetops Hotel start at 08.31 by Gordon Bryant, the managing director. The halfway halt will be the Station Hotel, Rothes, where the first car will be arriving shortly after 12 noon. The first of the finishers are due back at the Treetops Hotel soon after 18.00. There will be what sounds like a riotous post-rally party in two main ballrooms (one disco, one live band) and everyone is invited.

Until the middle of last week it had been reluctantly decided by the organisers not to circulate details of the route. This measure was taken on Forestry Commission advise owing to the extreme fire danger prevalent in March, but the Forestry officers relented at the last minute so some spectator information is available. It is as follows:

Stage	Earliest time of arrival	Map references
SS1 Bennachie	09.04	Finish 40/697213
Remarks: Park with care. No parking on forest roads at the finish. Series of bends ¼-mile from the finish are worth watching.		
SS2 Gartly	09.31	Start: 39/582335 Finish: 39/530329
SS8 Teindland	13.14	Start: 29/296570 Finish: as above
Remarks: Park on verges clear of road. Bends near finish are good. Stage situated on B9103.		
SS11 Gartly 2	14.21	As Gartly 1
SS17 Glentanar 2	15.52	Finish: 39/504971
Remarks: Park clear of Bridge of Ess. Stage finish is very narrow, proceed with caution. Good corner situated 300 yards in from finish. Also interesting lochside section one mile in from finish.		
SS18 Durris 1	16.30	Start: 40/769925 Finish: as above
Remarks: Park on verges clear of road. Fast finish section — keep well back from the track!		
SS19 Durris 2	16.35	Start: 40/781909
Remarks: Park on wide verges. Hairpin 300 yards from the start is usually good.		

There are just over 100 entries for the event which is also a *Scotsman* championship counter; and some 80 stage miles have been provided within a total route of some 270 miles.

Roger Clark has won this Aberdeen and District MC run event four times previously. Undoubtedly this time will be the most difficult of the attempts. There are six other crews in the top ten with a very real chance of outright victory. It promises to be a fascinating struggle.

Chris Sclater is, regrettably, a leading absentee from the Granite entry. He feels that although he could just about afford to compete on the event, a combination of the necessity of large amounts of work which must be carried out to the old bodyshell of the car, coupled to the need to consolidate his return to the active garage trade while seriously understaffed, has made the long trek to Aberdeen impractical. He will not be contesting the Firestone for similar reasons.

Donald Heggie is debuting his new RS1800 in the colours of F. English, while the remainder of the leading runners provide few real surprises.

Top twenty starters are as follows: 1, Roger Clark/Jim Porter (RS1800); 2, Charles and Alec Samson (RS1600); 3, Andy Dawson/John Jensen (Lancia Stratos); 4, Ari Vatanen/Peter Bryant (RS1800); 5, Russell Brookes/John Brown (RS1800); 6, Pentti Airikkala/Mike Greasley (RS1800); 7, Billy Coleman/Dan O'Sullivan (RS1800); 8, Tony Fowkes/Bryan Harris (RS1600); 9, Brian Culcheth/Johnstone Syer (Dolomite Sprint); 10, Tony Pond/Dave Richards (Dolomite Sprint); 11, Drew Gallacher/Ian Muir (RS1600); 12, Bill Taylor/Ian McIver (RS1600); 13, Tony Fall/Mike Broad (Opel Kadett); 14, Andrew Cowan/Hugh McNeil (Colt Lancer); 15, Tony Drummond/Phil Short (RS1600); 16, Will Sparrow/Nigel Raeburn (Vauxhall Magnum); 17, Donald Heggie/George Dean (RS1800); 18, Colin Malkin/Paul White (Chrysler Avenger); 19, —; 20, Ronnie McCartney/Terry Harryman (RS2000).

Peugeot's Safari force

Peugeot's Safari team this year looks like being the most formidable ever seen from any team on the event in years. Following our story two weeks ago that the French Company were to debut a V6-engined 504 coupé, came the official announcement last week that two of the new cars will be entered for the team's front runners, Hannu Mikkola and Timo Makinen. The 504 V6 underwent extensive testing in Southern Morocco during the latter weeks of January in the hands of French test drivers, and the 2.6 litre unit is now apparently developing a very reliable 225-230 bhp; a figure which seems entirely credible. These cars, entered in G4, will be backed up by no less than three G2 504 170 bhp saloons for Ove Andersson, new signing Jean-Pierre Nicolas and local ace Bert Shankland. Nicolas has a simple verbal agreement with Gerard Larrousse of Renault competitions for the remainder of the season, but he is at present negotiating with another manufacturer for drives in the Tour de Course and one or two other events. He has never driven a Peugeot in competition but has recently spent a lot of time at the wheel of a 504 on the ice driving school at Isola. Should he do well for the team, it seems likely that he may be seconded into arrangements for the Morocco Rally later in the year. Peugeot recceing starts next week.

Nicolas – Peugeot team drive.

Aftermath of the break-in

The break-in at Terry Hoyle's workshops recently remains unresolved as we go to press and Terry seems somewhat pessimistic about a conclusion to the case. It appears that in total, three engines were stolen and the method and professionalism of those involved in the theft indicates that they knew exactly what they would find and where to find it. The ingenious 'guests' merely unbolted the roof of one of Terry's workshops to get at their prize. The three BDAs, one of which was destined for Russell Brookes' car in preparation for the Granite City at the weekend, were all just rebuilt and the temporary inmates completely ignored identical looking power units which were awaiting the Hoyle treatment. The significance is obvious and Terry feels that the 'job' was pulled by someone he knows well, such was the immaculate nature of the operation. Commenting on the situation on Tuesday, Terry confided that "its bad enough to have a break-in but even worse when it's someone you know." The engines in question were all 2-litre BDAs, but crankshafts, flywheels and other expensive items were also removed — again with the gourmet choice which indicated a chillingly accurate recollection of the storage at Terry's workshops. One might imagine that these items have already been spirited away to Europe.

But life goes on, and it seems that Terry, fully insured, will be able to satisfy customer demand. As far as Brookes is concerned, Terry had this to say "my job is to provide a service and with a bit of help from Ford, he's got an engine." This bit of help involves a possibly unique combination of engine components — a Brian Hart block and Terry Hoyle cylinder head/ancillaries, all of which enables Russell to get to the Granite City and maintain his strong presence in the RAC Championship.

Meanwhile the Brookes 'tarmac' car continues to progress steadily. At present the bodyshell is in Wolverhampton where Lucas are getting to grips with the wiring and immediately this job is completed, the remaining preparation will be carried out by Peter Harrison at Boreham — a loaned Brian Hart mill in this case provides the motive power. The car will definitely be ready to go in time for the Circuit of Ireland.

"Boring isn't it! Bernard Darniche looks on with apparent disinterest as his entrant/sponsor M. Chardonnet stands behind him. Full story page 24.

A strong Firestone entry

By last week over 110 entries had been received for the Firestone Rally, so 20 will have to be refused before the start which takes place on the 19th March (or next week). Leading entries besides those for Roger Clark/Jim Porter and Timo Makinen/Henry Liddon are John Taylor/John 'JJ' Jensen, who in this instance will be the third member of the Ford works team. Also entered are Achim Warmbold's 2-litre 16-valve Toyota Celica, and Jaroszewicz's Fiat 124 Abarth Rallye, while leading home crews include Antonio Zanini's SEAT. Bagration is also said to be arriving with his privately entered Stratos. Provisional entries have also been accepted for Billy Coleman and Pentti Airikkala, although if the former has taken up the entry, then Boreham knew nothing about it earlier this week.

The Idlewells Inside story

One competitor on the Dukeries, Richard Jackson in the ex-McCartney bros Porsche Carrera, was reported to the Clerk of the Course by an official observer for servicing in a non-service area. Indeed his service crew had also been spoken to by a police patrol car while they were parked on a verge on rally route. As a result of this report both Jackson and his service crew were reprimanded by the C of C and warned not to do it again. This action resulting in an official reminder to all competitors which they had to sign before they left the breakfast halt.

One would have thought this would have solved the problem; but no, service crews continued to pop up like rabbits in the most unexpected and undesirable places. As the C of C was passing through the stages in Clipstone, who should be come upon not more than 100 yards from a stage finish? Yes, you got it in one, the aforementioned Mr Jackson's service crew, naturally they were sent packing and Richard duly summoned before the organisers who excluded him from the event.

However, the offender duly protested that the organisers were not within their rights as the particular regulation only stipulated that they might impose a penalty of 1800 marks with no mention of exclusion, and furthermore the regulation went on to state that a competitor must also obey the instructions of a marshal or official as refusal would also incur an 1800 mark penalty. "So what!" said the organisers. "Well," said Mr Jackson, "my service car was ordered off the road and into the forest by three marshals because of traffic congestion; and as it so happens they are waiting outside to verify these facts." As indeed they were, Game, set and match to RJ it would appear!

Unfortunately this was not the case, and as the patient competitors waited in anticipation for the ceremonial prize giving, the second act of this drama was about to unfold. On a matter of principle, John Cleary, the driver of an RS2000 Mk 2, and runner up to Jackson in the combined Group 1 & 3 class made a formal protest regarding Jackson's so called illegal servicing, which Cleary also considered to be outside the spirit of the regulations and also an act which would bring the sport into disrepute. And of course if he won, it would also give him the class. It was the interminable wranglings on this point that delayed the prize-giving by nearly two and half hours, though in the end the protest was rejected. The main complaint from the average competitors was their lack of understanding of why the major awards could not have been presented as this protest only affected one class; well away from the top ten placings.

A busy time for Sparrow

Will Sparrow is going to be a busy man in the next few weeks as Gerry Johnstone is putting into operation a crash development programme prior to the Circuit of Ireland to finally sort the handling and braking problems which have beset the Magnum to some degree. The reason for the sudden development is that Gerry is attempting to build a new car for Sparrow that, it is hoped, will be ready in time for the Circuit; but at present the team have their doubts as exactly how best to set-up the chassis.

It is very difficult to find somewhere to carry out representative loose surface testing if you happen to reside near Luton, and it makes obvious sense to go on rallies to do the same thing. Thus, after the Granite City at the weekend, the DTV equipe will be making tracks to the South West Stages the following weekend before tackling the Cheltenham Festival as the last event before the Circuit. The car, which has been running four wheel disc brakes since the Mintex is expected to be fitted with four pot calipers in its tarmac format for the Circuit.

'Old red eyes' makes triumphant return to the hills...

Last Saturday the Donegal MC ran their Hills of Donegal rally on the northern-most peninsula of Ireland, an area which has not been effectively rallied for ten years now. There were 12 stages in all adding up to about 50 tarmac stage miles including the spectacular Malin Heads which is if anything considered to be more awe-inspiring than Fanad Head itself (the latter made well known by the Circuit of Donegal later in the year).

At one time it appeared from the entry list as though many of Ireland's top crews were on the point of descending on this particular event in order to shake-down for the Circuit of Ireland, but at the last moment many stayed at home for a variety of different reasons.

The rally was won by veteran John McClean (who shares his ex-Tordoff Carrera with Ken Shields, the man who so recently finished second in Galway). His co-driver on this outing was none other than a certain Donald Grieve. Second was Robin Lyons (RS1700) who was a strong contender for victory until he ran the bearings on the last stage and was forced to coast to the finish. Behind him there was a tie for third place between Kenny McKinstry who started at number 37 and Fred Patterson (Carrera). Fifth was Will Farren in his Mini. Will won here last year.

Early leader Ron Neely, going really well in his Tuborg Mini, was forced out when he broke the gearbox casing after a heavy landing, while Brian Nelson failed to make the start as the Irish Customs are still sitting on new gearbox parts which are awaiting fitting after damage sustained to the 'box in Galway. Dessie McCartney made an appearance in the Mazda with Terry Harryman and John Coyne won G1 in his Avenger. The rally was apparently as great a social success as the Circuit of Donegal itself and was sponsored by the Red Castle Hotel which of course hosted the event.

Recceing it seems, is already in progress on the Isle of Man; and with typical panache, the ebullient Dennis Cardell sets off from the ramp – some people would do anything for a free dinner!

Dennis Cardell was the guest speaker at a forum held for the marshals of the Manx Trophy Rally in Douglas last Wednesday, March 3rd. A good sized audience of over 200 people was attracted by the twin pleasures of Dennis and the Castrol DTV film "Winning Ain't Easy," which of course features last year's Manx, and a hot-pot supper was laid on during the evening.

Denise Cardell (Dennis' wife) actually visited the Island for the first time ever, the couple intending to spend three or four days on the Island, which could qualify Dennis for the easiest ever recce!

A few moments silence was observed at the beginning of the meeting in memory of Norman Cross, who had taken over from Roy Lightfoot as Press Officer for the event, but who was tragically killed in a car accident the week before.

Fowkes' plans progress well

Tony Fowkes reports that his new RS1800 is progressing well and the target of a Welsh Rally debut should be attained without too much problem. The engine failure on the Mintex — (itself a very rare occurence thanks to the Fowkes preparation care) — bent 12 valves and did other damage to the unit which has made Tony's appearance on the Granite City not entirely certain. Tony discovered that the crankshaft pulley suffered some form of metal fatique in the keyway area due to a fractured bolt in the centre of the crankshaft. As Tony said — "you learn something new every day!" But he is as enthusiastic as ever about the year's prospects — "all we've got to do is go out and win now!"

● The Glamorgan Rhoose Airport authorities have their eye on the rally scene and have offered the Welsh Association "facilities for car parking and the airport terminal facilities to competitors". It has not been said in so many words, but they seem to be interested in a Start/Finish/Halt venue useful for a big event . . . such offers don't come very often.

Top crews go for Cheltenham

Entries are flooding in for the Cheltenham Festival Rally, the second round of the Castrol/AUTOSPORT championship and top names so far include Will Sparrow, George Hill, Paul Faulkner, Jeff Churchill, Piggy Thompson, Graham Elsmore, Gordon Batchelor, Terry Brown, Laurie Richards, David Stokes, Robin Farrington, Mike Rawson, Robert James, etc, while in G1 leading runners include Bernard Banning, Terry Kaby, Paul Appleby, and Chris Field.

Высококачественная белая офисная бумага КСЕРОКС «Бизнес»

Markku Alen piles on the coals as only he knows how . . . A bemused Greasley lurks beside him.

Unveiled: Fiat's road racers

For many months now Fiat have quietly been getting on with the job of developing their 131 range for rallying application in the 131 Abarth guise to replace the ageing 124 Spyder, with future G2 regulations in mind, and to complete the rationalization process current in Fiat competition thinking which is to devote the company's attentions to driver championships, thus avoiding unnecessary and expensive clashes with Lancia.

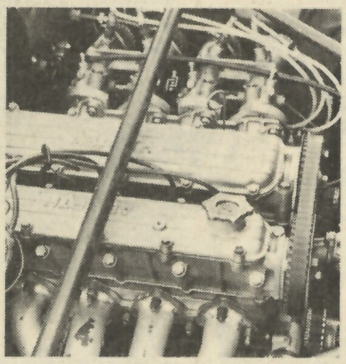
At a recent press conference and reception based on the brand new Fiat test track complex at Nardo near Lecce in the far south of Italy, Fiat officially unveiled their new model to the press, and to add some spice to the occasion, as well as to deflate some press aspirants' egos, Markku Allen and Maurizio Verini were present with the ultimate Fiat development of the 131 Mirafiori rally car which will continue its intensive development this year before embarking on a major rally programme in 1977.

Fiat thinking in competition revolves around a marketing strategy similar to Ford's in that emphasis is being placed on identification with the most popular marque which the company now manufacture, and to further this aim as well as comply with forthcoming and present homologation requirements, the factory have created a basis for serious competition in the 131 Abarth, rather as Ford might have done with the RS1800 were it possible for anyone to have bought them.

So far over 350 of these 'halfway house' Abarth road/competition cars have been produced and will shortly be farmed out to dealerships in Italy and Europe to assess public reaction; but one gets the impression that the company regard this side of affairs as purely an added bonus to the 131 rally programme rather than an attempt to actually make it a viable proposition in itself. Currently under consideration is a project to initiate a manufacturing run of 5000 of these cars so that by 1978 it will be possible to run the car in G1, but at present Italian enthusiasts will be able to buy the car for the rather unrealistic price of 7,700000 Lire + 12 percent purchase tax, or something over £6,000 in Italy! This price itself is a plain enough indicator of how Fiat view the sales aspect of this particular 'limited edition' model. Obviously were the larger production run to be given the go-ahead, prices would fall, but at present the 131 Abarth is simply a publicity vehicle which allows the real rally car to exist within the regulations for the next two years. There are no plans to export the car to Britain, and at the present rate of production, Fiat expect to have completed 1000 of these models by May of this year.

The Abarth Rallye specification differs considerably from its lesser brethren and under the aggressive-looking exterior, extensive use has been made of light alloys and glass fibre, while the rear suspension is completely different utilizing independent MacPherson strut arrangements after three alternative set-ups including a De Dion back axle were tried. The rear suspension is thus similar to the old Fiat 124 Spyder specification. The engine is basically very similar to previous experience, but by altering the stroke, Fiat have stretched the swept volume to 1995cc. Sixteen valves and a twin cam head remain essentially unaltered. The engine breathes through a single Weber carburettor and compression ratio is 10 to 1. The result of these efforts is 140bhp at 6400rpm while torque is up to 130lb/ft at 3800rpm; and with alterations to transmission whch is now five speed, and tyres which are the new low profile Pirelli P7 as standard (the first time these advanced 'spec' tyres have been fitted as standard equipment to a road car) the new Fiat is quite a little 'tweaker.' Discs are of course fitted all round. The company can offer the car as indicated above for club competition or road use but with the aid of a number of Abarth 'packs' such as LSD, springs, induction etc., can supply a similar vehicle to that which the works team will be campaigning in the future — all it takes is money.

Kugelfischer injection for the latest 131.

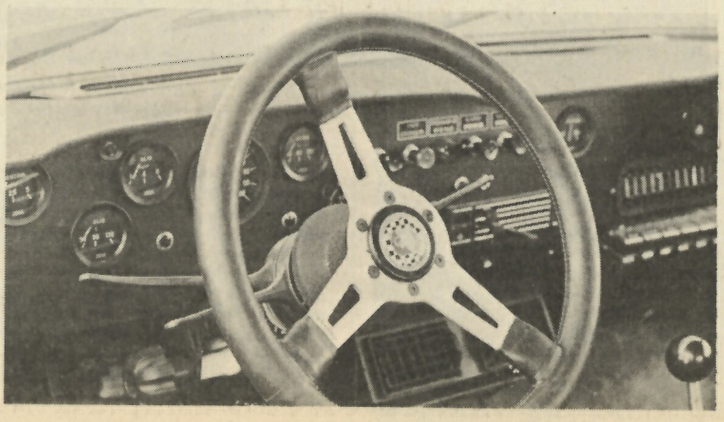


The new Olio Fiat rally car has had a few previous outings on 'club' events in Italy but its first real outing in anger will be on the Elba Rally at the end of the first week in April when three of the blue and yellow cars for Alen, Verini and probably Bacchelli will represent the works effort for the first real 'go' in anger. Two different power outputs were quoted during the conference, but 220 bhp at 7600 seemed to be the more optimistic of the two. The 1995cc engine in its ultimate rally guise is now on Kugelfischer fuel injection and plans are to make use of a number of representative rallies this year (and we gather that the RAC is a distinct possibility) before a concerted attack on the European rally world is launched next year.

From what the writer was able to gather both through an exhiliarating ride with Markku Alen, and from his comments about the car, the new 131 will prove to be a highly successful machine. Alen certainly rates it highly although one has to simply get used to the feeling of fragility which the independent rear suspension bestows as it clatters noisily over the ruts. With the committed, vast resources of the Fiat empire behind the team, and the amazing talents of Alen (not forgetting Verini who is at his best on tarmac pace note events which abound in Europe and Italy) plus the back-up from two youthful drivers, Bacchelli and Cambiarghi; one expects to see the team back in the news before long.

Meanwhile we hear rumours that Mr Alen may be putting in some welcome appearances in England before the RAC, and obviously therefore not in a Fiat. The Welsh and/or Scottish appear likely bets; the car just has to be a Ford . . . but whose? That is the question.

Business-like interior . . .



Big deal 'vans

This year's Caravan Rally promises to be a genuine all-star spectacular with rally heroes galore hitching up unlikely machines to 'vans and rushing off into Welsh forests, etc, to throw themselves at the scenery. Three Opel Commodore GSE Coupés lent by DOT will be fielded as a dealer team for last year's outright winner Dan Grewer, Ron Shipp and David Terry; while Tony Pond is entered in a Triumph 2500S as team leader of a three-car equipe comprising himself, Russell Close and Raymond Cook (the latter the managing director of the company which manufacture the Monza range of caravans). With the hilarious once-in-a-lifetime chance to see Roger Clark in a forest driving a Cortina Estate and towing a 'van, also thrown-in, this event may establish for itself a new niche in the hearts of 'real' rally enthusiasts.

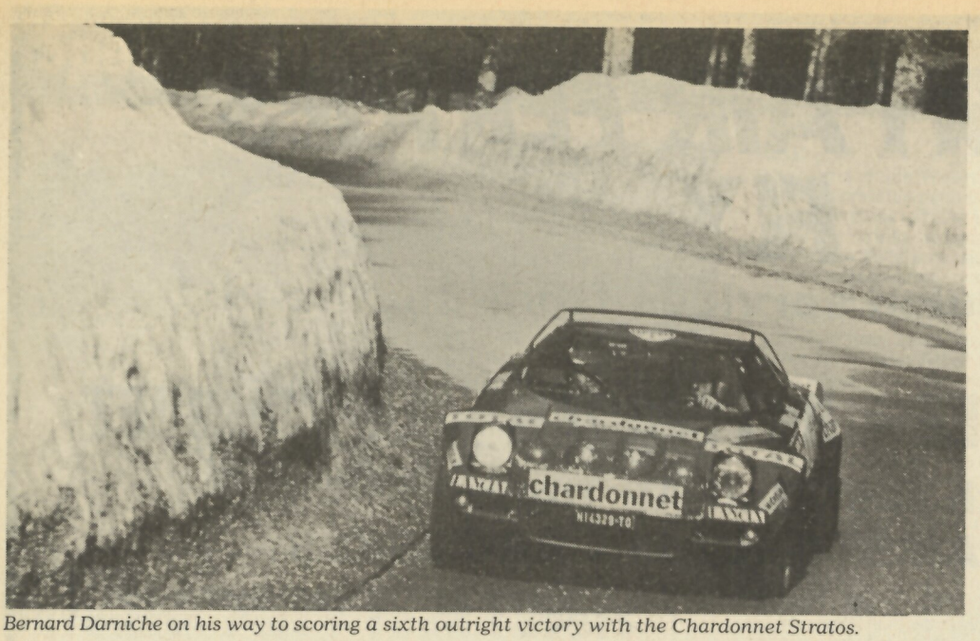
Policy decision: Chris' gearboxes are going cheap

As part of a policy launched by Chris Coburn for cheaper club rallying, Vauxhall owners are able to obtain from DTV Sport Dealers a heavy duty axle and limited slip diff which is directly interchangeable with the standard unit. This axle is based on the high performance Firenza casing and has been proved under competition conditions, including being used by Chris Lord during his drive on last year's RAC Rally. Most of the development required to complete this axle has been in producing a suitable LSD. This is a Salisbury unit which Will Sparrow Engineering assemble and is available under part number 44/333.

To complete the Club drivers transmission, Coburn Improvements are offering a much reduced cost five speed ZF gearbox. This further contribution to "Chris Coburn's Campaign for Cheaper Club-rallying" in utilising the Firenza ZF gearbox which Vauxhall have been persuaded to release at a special price as part of DTV's private entrant incentive programme. The gearbox is available from DTV Sport Dealers at the impressively low price of £128, under Sportpart number 45/233. This gearbox of course is not close ratio.

Still vacancies on Esso Uniflo Stages

Redditch and District MC are currently promoting their Esso Uniflo Stages rally which takes place on Sunday April 4th. There are 35 miles of stages on airfields and private lands. The start is at Mayfair Garage, Tamworth in Staffs, with the halfway halt at Enstone. The finish is at Chipping Norton. Regs have been out some time but there are still some vacancies left to fill. More information can be obtained from Max Whetton, 55 Jubilee Avenue, Redditch, Worcs. Marshals are also still required.



Bernard Darniche on his way to scoring a sixth outright victory with the Chardonnet Stratos.

LYONS — CHARBONNIERES

Easy! Easy! for Darniche

Bernard Darniche and his regular co-pilot Alain Mahe took what must now be the most successful Stratos ever built, the Chardonnet entered 2-valve car, to yet another outright victory on the Rallye Lyons-Charbonnieres making six in all so far, as well as third overall on the Monte. As on the 24 hours of Chamonix and the Niege et Glace, second to Darniche was the Alpine-Renault of Bruno Saby and Brigette Huchan, though Jullien shared the car with him at Chamonix where they beat people like Nicolas, Mikkola and Verini.

ENTRY

The entry for this year's rally, backed by Shell and the Casino at Lyons-Charbonnieres—from which the event takes its name, was very poor indeed compared with previous years, only managing a measly 47 starters on a rally which was again granted the highest coefficient in the European championship.

Last year's winner Maurizio Verini still has not started to tackle this year's championship, because the 131 is not quite ready yet, so the small field was led away from the start at the Casino at 11.00 pm on the Thursday evening by the smart blue Lancia Stratos of Bernard Darniche, sporting the ultra-wide Michelin SB 10 racers. Behind him was Poland's premier driver, the bearded Andrej Jaroszewicz with new co-driver Zyskowski Kyszaro in their old Fiat Abarth 124 with 2-litre 16-valve fuel-injected engine giving only 190 bhp compared with the 240 of the Stratos. The Fiat was disguised in the new Polski-Fiat colours of black/yellow but when you lifted the bonnet, traces of the trusty red of last year could still be seen.

Next should have been Jean-Claude Andruet making a return after his nasty Monte accident on Burzet, but it seems that his confidence has not yet fully returned and his seat was taken by Guy Frequelin and Jacques Delaval in the immaculate, if somewhat tired Alfetta GT, which came from Autodelta but was entered by the French importers SOFAR.

A whole flock of privately entered Renault-Alpines follwed them, led by the black Esso and Delta backed 1800 A110 version of Bruno Saby, one of the very few drivers on Kleber, everyone else electing to use Michelins. Group 1 looked to be a straight battle between the BMW 2002 Tii of Christian Dorche and the newly homologated Opel Kadett GTE of Francois Serpaggi.

The route which contained just nine different special stages, all but two of which were to be tackled twice, giving 16 tests in all totalling 423 kms of the 1,500 kms distance to be covered between the Thursday night and the Saturday morning with no substantial break at all. This combined with the fact that no roadbook was issued (only the original list of roads in the regulations) had co-drivers working overtime to keep on the right route even on the stages, as they were often held among a labirynth of minor roads, one stage containing no less than 23 junctions that were marked on the map.

RALLY

The first stage at midnight saw Darniche quickly into his stride bettering Jacques Panciatici's time in yet another Alpine by no less than 30s on the 24 km stage, 4½ hours of transport sections followed this down to the Ardeche, where three stages were to be tackled, twice over the le Moulinon test with a lap of the familiar Monte stage — Burzet, in between, but by then the Alfetta GT had already fallen by the wayside. Having had fuel injector problems on the first stage, Guy Frequelin lost second and fifth gears the first time over le Moulinon and was forced to retire, but during this brief encounter with the car, he had been very impressed particularly with the car's balance and handling.

On Burzet, Darniche decided to fit knobblies, being somewhat wary of the gravel that was left around, but these wore so quickly that he was forced to slow down, letting Saby beat him here. But Burzet meant the end for Jaroszewicz, the gearbox giving up on the rather old 124 Abarth, which he hopes to replace shortly with a 131 and perhaps even a Stratos for the Lugano Rally next month. So that after these first four stages, Darniche led in the Stratos by three minutes from Bruno Saby with Jacques Panciatici lying third, and the incredibly quick Gp1 Kadett of Francois Serpaggi staying ahead of the leading Gp2 car Georges Benoit BMW 2002 and his Gp1 rival Christian Dorche.

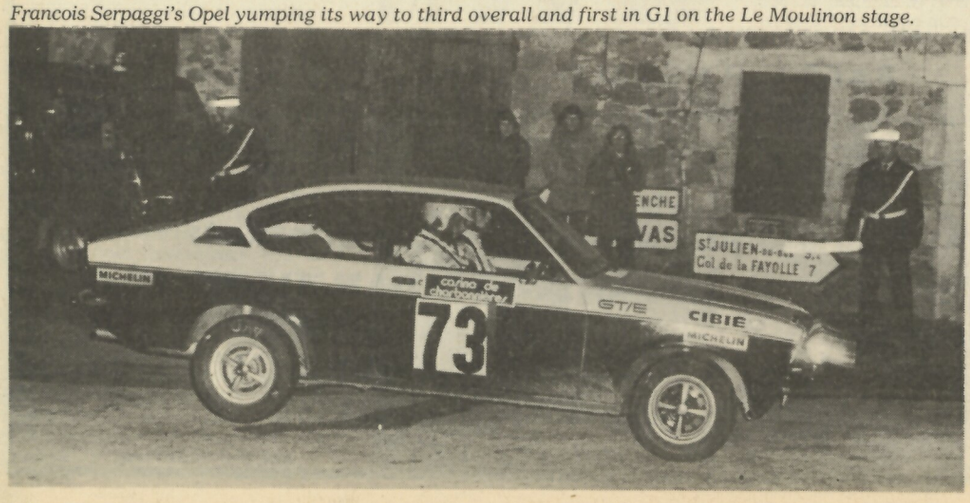
It was now well into Friday morning as competitors headed for St. Jean-en-Royans where they were to tackle the old Monte stage once again, going two times round. Darniche was now setting fastest times on every stage, but it was not quite a trouble free run for on the way over to St. Jean the belt drive to the water-pump broke, but luckily this was on a road section. Another long road section brought competitors to Belley, which is just north west of Chambery and where the final night of the rally is traditionally based, being visited five times during the night, two loops were each tackled twice from here the first including three stages and the second, much shorter, only two. It was on the third of these stages in the first loop, a marathon 50 km stage, that George Benoit had the indignity of actually overshooting the same hairpin twice in one night. In fact he also dropped ten minutes road penalties which may well have lost him his sixth place overall, but he would still hold onto Gp2, whereas after nine stages he had been lying fourth behind Serpaggi who was struggling on the wrong tyres being unable to use slicks on the Gp1 car. While Darniche was now running desperately short of his ultra-wide racers and the Michelin men were feverishly hand-cutting more tyres in Belley.

Panciatici had now vacated third place overall dropping out the first time over the long Vaux-Fevrou test, where Jean Rick in his R12 Gordini too was in trouble stopping at the same hairpin as Benoit had his problems, with an electrical failure. This left Bernard Darniche to run out the easy victor from Bruno Saby who was a comfortable second ahead of the leading Gp1 car of Francois Serpaggi who held on to the end despite a last minute challenge from Christian Dorche. He climbed his BMW 2002 Tii into fourth place ahead of another Gp1 car, the Alfa Romeo GTV of Jean-Paul Barin, Georges Benoit who may or may not be sixth, the leading Gp3 car of Noel Labaune (Porsche Carrera 2.7 RS) and the late entrants Bontaz—Bellon in an ex-Opel Marseilles Ascona as used by Chasseuil and Clarr.

A great pity that such a promising event, with regard to terrain, should be reduced to 47 starters of which only 24 finished, when a few years ago 200 cars would have flooded the entry list, but this event is now the most expensive in the French championship with an entry fee of 3,700 FF, some £400, let alone the cost of practising, when the same amount of points can be scored on a 300 km event with virtually no entry fee. Add to this poor organisation, especially time controls, no road book (this led several crews out of the rally including the experienced co-driver Francois Conconi who is normally with Michel Mouton) and it would seem likely that the event will be even less popular next year and could well be dropped from the European Championship or at least have its coefficient reduced.

HUGH BISHOP

Francois Serpaggi's Opel yumping its way to third overall and first in G1 on the Le Moulinon stage.



28th Rallye Lyons-Casino de Charbonnieres ECR Coeff. 4

1, B. Darniche/A. Mahe (Lancia Stratos), 4h 48m 25s; 2, B. Saby/B. Huchan (Alpine A100), 5h 02m 57s; 3, F. Serpaggi/M. Andreanni (Opel Kadett GTE), 5h 15m 01s; 4, C. Dorche/P. Gertosio (BMW 2002 Tii), 5h 26m 01s; 5, J.-P. Barin/J.O. Barin (Alfa Romeo2000 GTV), 5h 29m 52s; 6, G. Benoit/C. Villon (BMW 2002 Tii), 5h 31m 19s; 7, N. Labaune/J. Maurin (Porsche Carrera), 5h 33m 18s; 8, B. Bontaz/M. Bellon (Opel Ascona), 5h 42m 03s; 9, B. Meunier/M. Mialon (Alpine), 5h 46m 44s.

Group one: Serpaggi/Andreanni (Opel Kadett GTE).

Correspondence

The editor is not bound to agree with readers' opinions

Not in the interests of the sport

When I read the recent *Editorial* about apathy among club drivers in AUTOSPORT my first reaction was one of total anger. That a specialist motoring journal should take such a blatant side-swipe at the majority of British racing drivers seemed to me to be completely against the interests of the sport.

It seems obvious to me that the national publicity generated by the two young ladies mentioned stems from the fact that both have already made their names in other sporting spheres. Sports, incidentally, which receive considerably more national coverage than ours anyway.

I expect that similar coverage would be given to a top formula one driver – of either sex – were they to hang up their helmets and take to a totally different sport.

"Ronnie Peterson signs for Man U!" for example.

Ninety per cent of the club drivers I know have no objection to female competitors and welcome the publicity they bring to the sport. We realise they offer no serious competition, or haven't in the past! Perhaps this season may prove the turning point.

I've nothing against either of the two girls and wish them the best of luck. However, I do feel that there are several drivers more worthy of a Formula One drive. Drivers who, by dint of hard work, financial strain and proven ability, have shown they would be more competitive . . .

Whilst realising that motor-racing is now big business (should it be at club level, helicopter flights and the like?) it does seem a shame that drivers with obvious talents are left out in the cold, purely because they do not have an extrovert or promotable personality.

Speaking for myself, I can't think of a peg to hang a national newspaper story on. You see, I'm not female or into smuggling! The best I can hope for is good local publicity. But my local paper is read by half a million people.

It requires considerable effort to generate interest, even at this level but once the local sports editor is won over it can be very rewarding. This can take time though and is not something that can be done easily or by anyone.

I've gone to great lengths to promote myself already this year and I hope that, by doing so, I have made the local media more motor racing conscious. So far I have had four quite lengthy spots on BBC Radio Leicester as well as lots of other publicity.

Recently I took what I consider to be a bold step in allowing a lady journalist to drive my new car at Silverstone. She had never visited a motor racing circuit before and took a lot of persuading. But the resulting full-page article was well worth the effort. The expense and risk involved was considerable and not something that any club driver could undertake lightly even if there were enough women journalists to go round. This is, however, an indication of the lengths a normal driver has to go to to get publicity.

I am also bemused by another point: I seem to recall that it was AUTOSPORT who, not so long ago, were amazed when an experienced and competitive Formula Ford driver wanted to make the unprecedented jump to Formula two. What price a less experienced Formula Ford driver to F1?

I agreed with AUTOSPORT on that issue in the same way that I thought it a good idea that drivers had to progress to FF2000 through the 1600's. While we're on the subject, whatever happened to progression through the formulas?

Another point the writer made was that the average competitor was apathetic. Does he realise the thousands of hours that go into getting cars to the grid in the first place? Hours often spent in cold, wintry workshops invariably after a hard day's work. Apathetic people wouldn't even made the grid!

As for a BRSCC instigated walkabout at Brands, great, but wouldn't it have been nice to have been asked. There's precious little time between practice and the start of racing and competitors are often involved in vital last minute preparation. Cleaning, refuelling, ratio changes and even engine swops are often the order of the day. There has got to be a more convenient time for communication with the public.

With the current cost of entry fees, petrol, tyres, etc motor racing must be one of the few sports in which the exponents actually pay to entertain the public. And we are now expected to act as unpaid Public Relations Officers.

I've just spent nine days on the Royale stand at the Donington Speed Show – a public relations exercise for which I was paid – and during that time have seen more racing drivers than most people. I've therefore been in a pretty good position to judge the effect your *Editorial* had. It would seem to have achieved its desired effect (or at any rate what I assume was desired) in as much that it has moved most to comment forcibly. The pile of discarded AUTOSPORTS in the wastebin was probably coincidental.

In conclusion, it's worth remembering that most of us are dedicated racing drivers who live for their sport. We are not PRO's and anyway the sensationalist national press would not find us good copy whatever efforts we made.

LEICESTER. JOHN BRIGHT

Ability doesn't govern

I must respond to your *Editorial* of February 26 regarding apathy among club competitors and the promotional side of motor racing where women are involved. Your *Editorial* omits several important points.

Women entering what has always been regarded, rightly or wrongly, as a man's sport are a minority and therefore readily promotional group. If I regularly attended my local knitting circle or was always present at the clinic to do my pre-natal exercises I wouldn't have any trouble making the National Press either!

Divina Galica and Ann Moore were already 'world names' prior to their motoring exploits and although I cannot hold this against them, they start with an advantage over others.

If you are calling me a male chauvinist because I do not like being beaten by women, you are right. Equally I do not like being beaten by men either, so let us not confuse chauvinism with competitive spirit and the will to win.

No, the galling thing is that Davina Galica and Ann Moore are where they are because they are women, promotable by being a minority in motor sport, and for no other reason – certainly not ability. The majority of average club drivers are faster.

I include myself as an average club driver with some single-seater experience, and if anyone would care to arrange a back-to-back test it would give me the greatest of pleasure to prove that I am quicker in a racing car than these two ladies. A point that I am prepared to back by putting money where my mouth is should this be necessary. Given the chance, a sponsor of mine would certainly not lack publicity but it is perhaps a sad fact that throughout the commercialised world of motor-racing today, ability is no longer the governing factor for advancement.

SHOREHAM, SUSSEX. ROY LEWINGTON

Spectators' interest

With reference to the letter by R. G. R. of Kent, published in last week's AUTOSPORT, I would also like to say something on the subject of promotion.

Surely it is in the interest of the driver and team as a whole, through the official promoters to publicize their activities. The spectators' main interest, apart from the professional techniques involved, is surely in the driver, and a few words from him now and then would neither inconvenience him nor do him any harm. Identification with a driver can give us an insight into how his mind works, how he approaches his driving of the car. He is not a non-entity, a nobody: he is one of two focal points on the track. We take an interest in the mechanism and features of the machine he controls, so why dismiss him as unworthy of note. It *is* the promoters who do the promotion, but their job is impossible if the co-operation of the driver concerned is not given. The sport, to my mind, would lose some of its magnetism if the drivers were ignored and the information and interviews with them, ended. I think that getting to know the drivers gives the sport its personality, makes us realize that that just isn't a Ferrari going round and round the track and doing very nicely – what a cute car! – but that there is Niki Lauda putting all he's got into bringing it home in first place.

Show us the drivers, show us the cars, and show us the great combination of man and machine in an exciting and interesting race.

LALEHAM, MIDDX. MARY COLEMAN

Drivers' defence

In response to your *Editorial* of February 26, can I come to the defence of the club driver?

Toward the end of last season I was involved at Ingliston in an experiment to help bridge the gap between the driver and public. Using a cassette recorder I taped interviews with drivers during the morning of a meeting, then during the afternoon these are replayed as a fill-in to the commentary.

You say that the Race file system will save the drivers "the embarrassment of having to talk about themselves." Nothing, in my experience, could be further from the truth. When presented with a microphone I found *no* driver unwilling to talk about himself, his sponsor, his car or his sport; most openly welcomed the opportunity.

So, on reflection, is it not the anonymous form filling that is at fault, not the competitor? If you are to advance this sport you need not only to be an accomplished driver but should be capable of self-promotion. Why then do the clubs not make more use of their press officers to help the young hopefuls on a more personal level, introducing them to the local (and national) press, radio and television, by way of a club press day for example. Any other suggestions?

EDINBURGH BRUCE CALDERWOOD

Absolute nonsense

Really, Ian Sadler's *Parc Ferme* (26.2.76) cannot be allowed to go without comment. If Ian would oblige the rallying community by finding things out for himself instead allowing himself to be influenced by (his parentheses) so called 'experts' he would no doubt discover that things in Bath are a lot different to his interpretation. I feel that your readers should know that Mr Sadler has not spoken to anyone remotely connected with what we are doing in Bath but still takes it upon himself to make ill conceived pre-event criticisms. Everyone who is involved with this year's RAC rally is only too well aware of the reputation we are following. York M.C. have set standards with their City which will be very hard to better but you may rest assured that the City of Bath with the help of everyone in the City is going to make sure that the reputation of this country's main rallying event is maintained, if not bettered. To finish I can only describe Ian Sadler's article by using his own title, "Absolute Nonsense."

RADSTOCK, BATH. MIKE SUMMERFIELD.

Timing solution

Surely the best solution to the problems raised by Martin Holmes on the thorny question of stage timing lies in the use of clocks with digital display.

Such a system completely rules out the classic parallax error and the "58 second jump". A time of 14.35.58 will mean exactly that and not (possibly) 14.34.58 and thus frees the marshal from the exhausting chore of knowing what minute he is "on" all the time.

Furthermore, the time appears exactly as it is both written *and* spoken and does not in addition need the conversion from the more normal ". . . twenty five to three, and fifty eight seconds . . ." as it can be perceived during moments of stress and excitement.

With modern electronics I suspect it could also be cheaper for organisers to hire such a clock as they must cost less than those expensive Swiss chronometers and rather more accurate than some I have used!

Something for the late lamented John Davenport to look into in his new role?

CHELTENHAM, GLOS. DAVID GREENWELL

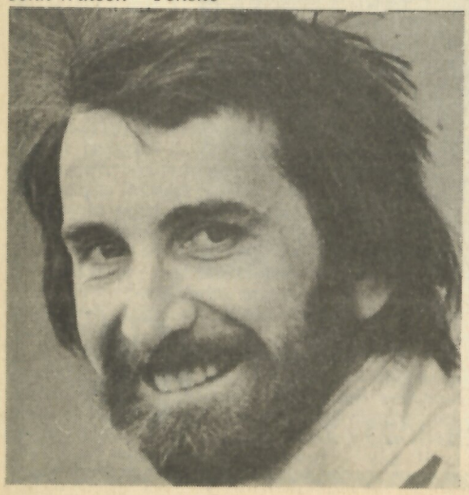
DAILY MAIL RACE OF CHAMPIONS PREVIEW

JAMES HUNT versus NIKI LAUDA

THE OTHER CHALLENGERS

Tom Pryce – Shadow

John Watson – Penske



It would appear, certainly at this stage, that this weekend's Race of Champions will be run on the new, revised Brands Hatch, where recent changes have brought the Kent circuit into line with the latest safety requirements with the re-routing of the infamous Paddock Bend and Bottom Straight. The circuit has, therefore, become fractionally shorter and lap times which stood previously will become obsolete. Opinion is divided as to whether the recent modifications will make the circuit faster or slower. Whatever the outcome, one thing is certain; it's been a last minute rush job to get the track into shape and one can only hope the new track surface has been passed as fit earlier this week and is sufficiently strong enough to stand up to the forces generated by 500 horsepower Grand Prix cars.

Taking place just a week after the South African Grand Prix, the annual Race of Champions is the traditional curtain raiser to the European Grand Prix season. It gives the British spectator a chance to see the latest pukka Formula 1 machinary before the season begins in earnest. This year is no exception. In fact this year's entry has a standard far higher than before. Out of the 20 Formula 1 car and driver combinations entered, half of them have been champions in their own right at some stage during their careers.

Perhaps it is thanks to the efforts of the Formula 1 Constructors Association, who liaised closely with Motor Circuit Developments and the organising BRSCC, that the quality of the entry is so high.

Heading the entry is the reigning World Champion, Austrian Niki Lauda, winner of the Brazilian and South African Grands Prix already in 1976 and looking set to retain his title. Lauda, following his brilliant win in South Africa last weekend, may well be driving the brand new unraced Ferrari 312 T2 with its de Dion rear suspension. This car, which was unveiled to the world's press several months ago, has gone well in testing but has yet to eclipse the lap times put up by the team's existing 312 T model with its conventional coil-spring suspension set-up.

However, the twists and turns of Brands Hatch could well suit the characteristics of this "new" system. Lauda's last race at Brands was the controversial 1974 Grand Prix and he'll undoubtedly want to avenge his technical defeat on that day.

Apart from seeing Lauda, this weekend's race will also give the British public a chance to see James Hunt racing his Marlboro-sponsored works McLaren M23 for the first time on home ground. With two pole positions in his first two Grands Prix for the team, James may well be vying for the coveted "fastest man in Grand Prix racing" title.

His battle with Lauda ended with a blown engine in Brazil while all he could do was watch the rear end of the Ferrari dangle tantilisingly out of reach at Kyalami. Can he redress the situation at Brands we wonder?

DAILY MAIL RACE of CHAMPIONS ENTRY

Ferrari Automobil spa (Dvr: Niki Lauda)	Ferrari 312/T2
Elf Team Tyrrell (Dvr: Jody Scheckter)	Tyrrell-Ford 007
Elf Team Tyrrell (Dvr: Patrick Depailler)	Tyrrell-Ford 007
John Player-Team Lotus (Dvr: Gunnar Nilsson)	Lotus-Ford 77
John Player-Team Lotus (Dvr: Bob Evans)	Lotus-Ford 77
Martini Racing (Dvr: Carlos Pace)	Brabham-Alfa Romeo BT45
Beta Team March (Dvr: Vittorio Brambilla)	March-Ford 761
Marlboro Team McLaren (Dvr: James Hunt)	McLaren-Ford M23C
Stanley-BRM Limited (Dvr: Ian Ashley)	BRM P201C
Shadow Cars (Dvr: Tom Pryce)	Shadow-Ford DN5B
Durex-Team Surtees (Dvr: Alan Jones)	Surtees-Ford TS19
Frank Williams Racing Cars Limited (Dvr: Jacky Ickx)	Williams-Ford FW05
Team Ensign (Dvr: Chris Amon)	Ensign-Ford N174
Hesketh Racing (Dvr: Harald Ertl)	Hesketh-Ford 308D
First National City Team (Dvr: John Watson)	Penske-Ford PC3
RAM Racing (Dvr: Loris Kessel)	Brabham-Ford BT44B
RAM Racing (Dvr: Patrick Neve)	Brabham-Ford BT44B
Scuderia Everest (Dvr: Giancarlo Martini)	Ferrari 312/T flat-12
Lec Refrigeration Racing (Dvr: David Purley)	Surtees-Ford TS16
Bob Howlings (Dvr: to be nominated)	Lyncar-Ford 006

Vittorio Brambilla – March

Jody Scheckter – Tyrrell

Patrick Depailler – Tyrrell
Jacky Ickx – Williams

Well James has had a pole there before; two year ago when he put the brand new Hesketh 308 on the pole slot. Brands has always been a good F1 circuit for him — for it was three years ago that he made his Formula 1 debut in an old Surtees TS9B and finished third.

Another man who will undoubtedly be flying is Tom Pryce, winner of the race last year in his Shadow DN5 and very much a local favourite, despite being a Welshman by birth.

Tom's already had two good Grand Prix races so far this year and therefore there's no reason to suggest that he won't be capable of repeating the form he showed this time last year, again in the capable DN5.

Incidentally, Tom's win last year has been Shadow's only Formula 1 success to date and their current sponsorless position would be boosted with a win here.

Looking for outright success at the moment, although their reliability record is excellent, are Elf Team Tyrrell. Their 007 series car is getting a bit long in the tooth now and although Jody Scheckter and Patrick Depailler are still able to finish in the points with it, the car is fading as a potential race winner. There is a slim chance that the new race worthy six-wheeler will be ready for the race (see P&P) which should be worth a long journey to see.

John Player Team Lotus have been at a low ebb for some time now and even the arrival of the new type 77 Grand Prix car late last year has done little to brighten their future. The loss of Ronnie Peterson (who has rejoined March Engineering) was a blow and so, even with the arrival of Swedish Formula 3 sensation Gunnar Nilsson and the reliable Bob Evans, it's a little early and a little unfair to expect this team to be pacesetters.

South Africa was a bad race for them, as was Brazil, but perhaps perseverance will pay in the end. Still, it'll give many a chance to see Nilsson in an F1 car.

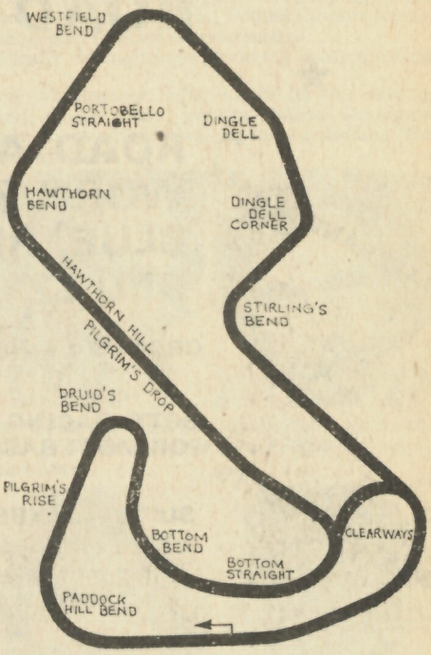
Another team finding it a struggle are Brabham who, having switched from the Ford Cosworth to the Alfa Romeo flat-12 design this season, are taking a large gamble.

Neither Carlos Reutemann or Carlos Pace (who's driving at Brands) are enjoying the success that they had last year with their Martini-sponsored Ford-powered cars but Pace, especially, is a fighter and a real racer, and he'll be trying hard. The shrill sound of the Alfa engine will be enough to excite though.

Taking over the Ford-powered Brabhams is John MacDonald's RAM team who are making their Formula 1 debut at this meeting. With support from various sponsors the team will be running a pair of ex-works BT44Bs for the promising Belgian Patrick Neve and the little known Swiss driver Loris Kessel who will both be making their F1 debuts. MacDonald did an excellent job last year in preparing Alan Jones' F5000 March-Ford V6 and so we wish them luck in this new venture.

Three dark horses for the race must be John Watson in the American Citibank Penske, Vittorio Brambilla in the lone works March and perhaps Jacky Ickx in the Williams.

Watson and Brambilla showed the enormous potential of their cars in South Africa last weekend and there's no reason to suggest that they won't go well at Brands, Watson having finished second in this race last year driving a Surtees.



Brands Hatch, Fawkham, Kent.
lap distance: 2.65 miles
*lap record: Niki Lauda and Tom Pryce, (F1 Ferrari 312 B3 and Shadow-Ford DN5), 1m 21.1s, 117.63 mph**
**old circuit*

RACE of CHAMPIONS – *previous results*

1972 *(40 laps – 106.00 miles)*
1, E. Fittipaldi (Lotus-Ford 72D), 112.22 mph;
2, M. Hailwood (Surtees-Ford TS9B);
3, D. Hulme (McLaren-Ford M19A).

1973 *(40 laps – 106.00 miles)*
1, P. Gethin (Chevron-Chev B24), 110.84 mph;
2, D. Hulme (McLaren-Ford M23);
3, J. Hunt (Surtees-Ford TS9B).

1974 *(40 laps – 106.00 miles)*
1, J. Ickx (Lotus-Ford 72E), 99.96 mph;
2, N. Lauda (Ferrari 312 B3);
3, E. Fittipaldi (McLaren-Ford M23).

1975 *(40 laps – 106.00 miles)*
1, T. Pryce (Shadow-Ford DN5), 113.79 mph;
2, J. Watson (Surtees-Ford TS16);
3, R. Peterson (Lotus-Ford 72E)

Race of Champions intinerary:
Practice: Saturday, 10.00 am-12.00 pm, 3.00 pm-4.30 pm.
Sunday, unofficial, 11.30-11.50 am.
Race (40 laps): Sunday, 2.30 pm.

Saturday March 13

09.00-09.20	Formula Ford 1600 practice (club circuit)
10.00-12.00	Formula 1 practice
13.00-13.10	**Formula Ford race, 10 laps (Club circuit)**
13.30-14.30	Touring car practice
15.00-16.30	Formula 1 practice

Sunday March 14

09.00-09.45	Formula Ford 2000 practice
10.00-10.20	Shellsport Escort practice (club circuit)
11.30-11.50	Formula 1 untimed practice
12.30	**APG FF2000 championship race, 15 laps.**
13.30	**Shellsport Escort Celebrity race, 10 laps**
14.30	**Daily Mail Race of Champions, 40 laps**
16.10	**Keith Prowse RAC Touring Car Championship race, 20 laps**

Высококачественная белая офисная бумага КСЕРОКС «Бизнес»

Carlos Pace – Brabham.

Alan Jones – Surtees.
Bob Evans – John Player Special.

Ickx won the race for Team Lotus two years ago, beating Lauda, but he's recently become an unknown quantity and, to be fair, very disappointing.

There are two Surtees entered, a works car from Australian Alan Jones, with backing from Durex, and an ex-works TS16 model hired out to David Purley.

Chris Amon, one of the sensations of last weekend's SouthAfrican GP, also entered in an Ensign which, hopefully, could tun out to be their later offering, while Harald Ertl brings the Hesketh marque back to the British circuits once again, albeit without his Lordship these days.

Completing the entry is a works loaned Ferrari 312 T for the promising Italian driver Giancarlo Martini (he ran in Formula 2 last year), run and entered by the Italian Everest team while Stanley-BRM are due to be running a car, probably for Ian Ashley. Finally there's the ex-John Nicolson Lyncar entered by northerner Bob Howlings for an unnominated driver.

SUPPORTING RACES

On Saturday, fitting in neatly between the Formula 1 practice sessions, there's a non-championship Formula Ford race. Quite naturally it has a good entry with names like Rad Dougall, and John Bright taking part in their Royales, along with Trevor von Rooyen who's just come over from South Africa where he finished second in the 1975 FF series. Entered in Merlyns are Rob Wicken and South African FF champion Bobby Scott (remember Jody Scheckter at the same meeting in 1970?) while Rick Morris and Bernard Devaney will uphold Hawke's honour. Then there's Miki Dee and Derek Daly (Van Diemens), Fred Sigafoos (Jamun), Mike Blanchet (Lola T440), Wil Arif (Crossle 25F) and many more. You try and choose a winner.

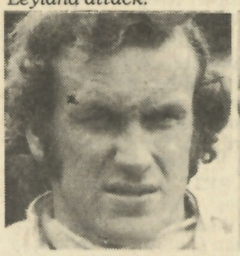
The following day sees the first round of the Allied Polymer Group Formula Ford 2000 championship and this promises to be a real cracker. This Formula's just a year old and already it's going from strength to strength. Unlike Formula Ford, these cars can use 2-litre Pinto engines and are allowed wings and slick tyres. Favourite for victory must be Tiff Needell in the Mac McKinistry entered Hawke DL14. Watch this young man go.

Hoping to upset Needell's chance of glory will be Ian Taylor, clubman's ace Frank Sytner and David MacPherson in Ken Hensley's (of Uriah Heep fame) Dulons, Richard Piper's Sark (née Starfire), Bernard Vermilio's Merlyn and the Eldens of saloon ace Jock Robertson and former Olympic medalist Ann Moore.

Just before the actual Race of Champions, there will be an *Evening News* Shellsport Escort race for sporting celebrities. Entered are Alan Lerwill (athletics), Joe Bugner (boxing), Brian Close (cricket), Chris Baldwin (bob-sleighing), Bob Wilson (football), Tom Percival (powerboating), Lord Oaksey (steeple-chasing), Divina Galica (skiing), Ann Moore (showjumping), Budge Rogers (rugby), Jonathan Woodall (Cresta Run), Alistair McHarg (rugby), Lady Jane Wellesley (Prince Charles), Ted Edgar (showjumping), Alan Knott (cricket) and Merial Tufnell (horse racing). That should be good entertainment.

Finally closing the day's racing is the opening round of the Keith Prowse RAC Touring Car Championship. This year the series has been limited to Group 1 car's under 3-litres and divided into four separate class categories.

Tom Walkinshaw (left) should be the leading Capri runner while reigning saloon champion Andy Rouse (right) will again be leading the Leyland attack.



Tiff Needell (left) and Ian Taylor (right) will be the leading contenders in the APG FF2000 championship opener.

Heading the largest class, and no doubt favourites for outright victory, are a bevy of Ford Capris driven by Chris Craft, Holman Blackburn, Vince Woodman, Gordon Spice, Tom Walkinshaw, Bill Gubelmann and Brian Muir to name but a few.

The '2-litre class' could also see a potential outright winner for it's here that we find the works, Broadspeed prepared, Leyland Dolomite Sprints driven by reigning touring car champion Andy Rouse and Ford Mexico champion Steve Thompson. A most formidable duo. Opposition may well come from Gerry Marshall's Vauxhall Magnum and Dave Brodie's Mazda RX3.

The 1300cc to 1600cc class is rather poorly supported but honours here will no doubt go to Win Percy's rapid Toyota Celica GT while in the smallest class (up to 1300cc), both Chrysler and Toyota (with Bernard Unett and Barrie Williams respectively) take on no less than four Alfasud Tis driven by John Lepp, Jon Dooley, Simon Kirkby and Malcolm Wayne.

CHRIS WITTY

SILVERSTONE

Shellsport F3s top the bill

The Silverstone championship race meeting programme gets underway this Sunday with the first of the BRDC promotions. The format is much the same as that which has been so successful in past years — a packed entry list of top championship contenders plus the APG driver of the Day award, Vandervell Novices series and, this year's new and exciting inter-counties league. The informative race programme has full details of the 13 countries which are contesting the league and the drivers who will be representing the areas. The Formula Ford and Clubman's sports races are the ones to count this time and the highest scorer from each county scores points. It may sound complicated but in fact it's very simple and something for spectators to get really involved in. (Enthusiastic support from the terraces will be welcome but no violence please).

The title of this opening meeting is National Championship Races with BBC Radio 1 and it is the second round of the Beeb's own saloon championship which is the feature event. There are, of course, no big cars this year, an upper limit of 3-litres being imposed. However the up to 3000 cc class has a strong flavour about it with three Capris, three BMWs, two Opels, two Dolomite Sprints and five Vauxhall Magnums entered. All these cars fighting for outright victory and nothing to choose between them — it's just got to be good. The lower classes are dominated by hordes of Japanese Mazdas and Toyotas. All the favourite top British saloon drivers will be present with names like Gerry Marshall, Nick Whiting, Ivan Dutton and Tony Lanfanchi being just a few.

This year's Silverstone championship list has a new F3 series at its head and Sunday sees the first round. Backed by Shellsport it is a five round series which has attracted all the top young British drivers and manufacturers. Among those entered for Sunday are Rupert Keegan, Chris Barnett, Stephen South, Mike Young, Ian Flux, Tony Dron, Austrian saloon champion Willi Siller and Italian Bruno Giacomelli.

The Brush Fusegear Formula Ford championship looks like being the more popular than ever this year and over 100 entries have been received for the opening round. Local hero Jim Walsh came close to winning more than one title last year and armed with a new Royale he should be able to realise his potential this year. The main challenge should be from Matthew Argenti, Mike Blanchet, Rod Bremner, Derek Daly, Rick Morris and David Heale.

Both previous winners of the Tricentrol Clubman's championship are entered in the first round of this year's series — this time they're in the same class and same team. We refer, of course, to Ardmore Racing members Nick Adams and Creighton Brown. Other top Clubman's men entered include Vernon Davies, John Davies, Peter Cooke, David Manley and Chris Greville-Smith.

Silverstone is situated on the main Towcester to Brackley road in Northamptonshire and for the first time there will be a proper public transport system to the circuit from Northampton, a bus will leave the Derngate Bus Station in Northampton at 1.15 and will leave the circuit after the last race. The return fare is just 69p. Racing begins at 3 pm.

Keegan takes off in style

Despite weather conditions bordering upon freezing point, the BARC kicked off their 1976 racing season with an entertaining day's racing at Thruxton last Sunday. Although there were some sparse grids on the eight-race programme, five championships got away to encouraging starts, the most notable being the BP Super Visco Formula 3 opener which saw the honours go, not unexpectedly, to young Rupert Keegan driving his familiar British Air Ferries March. However, it was not an easy win as Keegan found Stephen South on top form in his privately entered March and if this race is anything to go by, we should see a big needle match between these two former Formula Ford drivers throughout the season.

Talking of Formula Ford, Jim Walsh continued where Geoff Lees left off last year by taking his works supported Royale RP21 to a comfortable win. In the other races Alex Ferrada, Val Musetti and young Jonathan Palmer picked up useful wins in the Clubman's, *libre* and modified sports races as did John Homewood in the small capacity saloon event (although it was hard earned) and Tony Sugden in the big saloons.

The meeting kicked off with the opening round of the Oceanair Freight and Cargo specialists-sponsored Clubman's Sports series. This championship caters specifically for the Formula Ford-engined cars (*ie* B class) and it provided Alex Ferrada with an easy win in his familiar Team Ace Plant Mallock U2.

Starting from pole, Ferrada led all the way leaving attention focused on the squabble for the runner-up slot. This featured David Campbell's updated (to '76 spec) Phantom, former karting ace Don Farthing in the ex-works Mallock Mk16E (raced last year by Arthur himself) and Guy Woodward in the ex-Nick Adams Mallock U2.

Woodward kept a watching brief throughout while Campbell managed to keep Farthing at bay until three laps from home.

Although Zekia Redjep sat on pole in his familiar Escort and led for a lap, Tony Sugden soon reversed the positions with his Escort and try though Redjep might, he was unable to restore the status quo, failing by 0.2s in a dramatic bid to oust the 43-year-old Doncaster electrician on the run-in to the flag.

The drive of the race was put up by Phil Winter in his familiar Mini, which swept everything before it last season. Winter was quickly challenged soon after the start by Jeff Ward who, may it be said, had only done a couple of practice laps after having trouble with his regular 1.2-litre Epic Imp. A great dice looked set but a collision between the pair of them at the chicane on lap two left one bent Imp and Winter half a lap behind his class leader. He pulled back that deficit in five very entertaining laps, his left hand door showing definite signs of where he and Ward had touched.

Although David Heale (Reynard) pushed him closely for the first couple of laps, Jim Walsh had no trouble in winning the opening round of the DJM Records Formula Ford championship, stroking his works-supported Royale RP21 to a comfortable win. All the action took place behind, starting with ex-Canadian FF champion Rod Bremner having a horrific accident while exciting Church on lap two. His Bulova Crosslé 30F flicked spectacularly several times at high speed but fortunately Rod escaped unscathed.

Out of the dust a struggle developed for second place with Heale dropping back into the clutches of Dave Buttigieg (Dulon MP17), Irishman Bernard Devaney and young Derek Warwick both in their new Hawke DL15s.

Warwick ousted Heale for one lap but eventually lost out on the final run in to the flag, being pipped by Buttigieg as well. Devaney spun away his chances at Cobb on the last lap as did his team-mate Derek Daly, who'd been lying seventh at that stage in his new Van Diemen.

Having been successful last season in a modsports Sprite, Jonathan Palmer, the 19-year-old medical student from Guy's Hospital, continued in the same vein by taking his ex-Andy Fraser Cooper London Ltd Marcos GT to a promising win in the recently revamped BARC modified sports car race.

Although Palmer was headed away from his pole slot by Simon Packford's neat little Davrian and Ian Hall's equally nimble Mini Jem (now with 1140cc), the extra power of the Marcos eventually told down the straights and Hall's brief moment of glory lasted just one lap.

While Palmer kept sufficiently clear of the pair of them, both Hall and Packford circulated as if tied together, Packford making a last-ditch effort which succeeded by a coat of paint; a missed gear change by Hall not helping his chances.

Having had oil pressure problems with a borrowed engine in practice, Dave Bettinson took things a little easy in his Caterham Super 7, even having time for a quick spin *en route* to his customary (unprotested) class win.

Having taken advantage of some pre-race testing at the circuit, it was 22-year-old Stephen South who put his John Stokes-owned Bogarts of Birmingham March-Toyota 753 on pole for the opening round of the 1976 BP Formula 3 series. South had lapped in a remarkable 1m 16s during the very cold early morning session, 0.4s under the lap record and a clear 2s quicker than anybody else. To underline his form, he was still quickest in the second session which saw Mike Young's works Modus-Toyota M1 and Rupert Keegan's BAF March Toyota 743 (which won the BP Concours prize) completed the front row having tied on 1m 17.4s. Keegan was using the latest '76 spec lightweight engine from Novamotor which had only arrived in the country 48 hours earlier.

The second row comprised Chris Barnett in his March-Toyota 753 and Bruno Giacomelli, the young Formula Italia champion who was having his first ever F3 race in the works March 763 (see *Pit and Paddock*).

Non-starters, thus leaving a grid of just nine cars, were Bob Arnott's March 743 which blew its piston rings out in practice and the other works Modus of Swiss Willi Siller which pushed a hole in the Toyota block after just one lap of the second practice session.

A fortunate starter was Tony Dron in the immaculate Unipart March 763 which, because of problems in mid-week, hadn't even turned a wheel until raceday. The Denny Rowland-prepared Triumph Dolomite Sprint engine was reluctant to start early on so Dron missed the first practice. A few laps in the Clubman's session gave him the feel of the car which, during the second session, blew off an oil line. Fortunately the engine seemed undamaged and Dron was able to start and to drive a steady race.

South got a good start to head Keegan away while Young found himself without a clutch and therefore retired after a slow lap. It looked as though South might get clean away, despite locking a wheel entering the chicane at the end of the first lap but Keegan, Barnett and Giacomelli were right behind.

Then on lap two a bracket on South's roll-over hoop broke out around the back of the circuit. From this breakage a piece of shoulder padding (from his seat) worked loose and the wind pressure flicked it up over his visor. Temporarily blinded South braked instintively, and Keegan and Barnett whipped through.

Keegan was now clear of his main rival but South's chase of the leader was aided when Barnett overcooked it at the chicane, losing valuable time. Bit by bit and in great opposite lock style South closed on Keegan but Rupert, driving with a calmness never seen before, gained valuable time while lapping a slower car at the chicane. In his anxiety to make up for this untimely baulking, South spun at Segrave and thereby gave Keegan the race on a plate.

Giacomelli hung on to the leaders well before spinning at the chicane, rejoining to dice with Barnett until the very end, and getting past the young Briton on the last lap.

So Keegan came home a good winner and now, having broken his duck, there is a good chance that many more will follow. As for South, even if he'd led all the way, Keegan would still have won. Why? South's March ran out of petrol on the last lap and he only just coasted over the line!

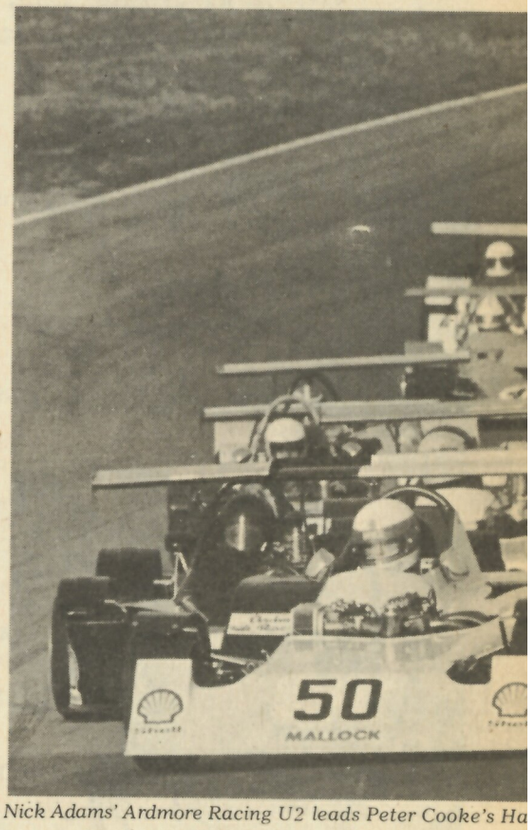
The small saloon race saw pole man Andy Holloway lose the exhaust pipe on his Imp, so he had to be content and let the similar cars of Brian Prebble and John Homewood dice it out for the overall honours with added support from Ginger Marshall's unique Mini Countryman. A spin by Prebble at the chicane on the last lap gave Homewood a rare Thruxton victory.

After Ray Mallock's beautifully prepared Ardmore Racing F2 Lola T450-Swindon BDX broke a fuel union while streaking off into the lead of the *libre* race, it was left to Val Musetti's similarly powered March 74B to notch up his second easy win of the weekend. John Wingfield's Ralt RT1 was a distant second, a spin exiting the chicane not affecting his vain chase of Musetti at all.

Closing the day was a consolation Formula Ford race which was won by David Toye's Royale RP21.

CHRIS WITTY

Rupert Keegan on his way to his first ever Formula 3 v



Nick Adams' Ardmore Racing U2 leads Peter Cooke's Ha

BP Super Visco Formula 3 championship
15 laps — 35.25 miles
round 1

1. Rupert Keegan (March-Novamotor/Toyota 743), 19m 25.0s, 109.21 mph;
2. Stephen South (March-Novamotor/Toyota 753), 19m 47.4s;
3. Bruno Giacomelli (March-Novamotor/Toyota 763), 19m 55.4s;
4. Chris Barnett (March-Novamotor/Toyota 753), 19m 56.6s;
5. Tony Dron (March-Rowland/Triumph 763), 20m 23.2s;
6. Ken Silverstone (March-Novamotor/Toyota 753), 20m 38.4s.

Fastest lap: South, 1m 16.4s, 111.02 mph (**equals record**).

Oceanair Clubmans Sports Championship round (8 laps): 1, Alex Ferrada (1.6 Mallock U2-Davron Ford Mk16B), 12m 00.2s (94.21 mph); 2, Don Farthing (1.6 Mallock U2-Holbay Ford Mk16E), 12m 08.0s; 3, David Campbell (1.6 Phantom-Smith Ford P76B), 12m 11.0s; 4, Guy Woodward (1.6 Mallock U2-Holbay Ford Mk14), 12m 11.6s. **Fastest lap:** Ferrada, 1m 28.4s, 95.95 mph.

Forward Trust 1000 Plus Special Saloon championship round. Overall and Over 1300cc class. (8 laps): 1, Tony Sugden (1.8 Ford Escort), 12m 07.2s, 93.34 mph; 2, Zekia Redjep (2.0 Ford Escort BDG), 12m 07.4s; 3, Chris Sims (2.2 Vauxhall Magnum), 12m 49.4s; 4, Phil Winter (1.3 BL Mini), 13m 08.0s. **Fastest lap:** Rejep, 1m 28.2s, 96.16 mph. **100 to 1300 cc class:** 1, Winter, 86.11 mph; 2, Chris Clarke (1.3 Mini-Cooper S); 3, Mick Davies (1.3 Mini-Cooper S). **Fastest lap:** Winter, 1m 30.8s, 93.41 mph.

DJM Records Formula Ford championship round (8 laps): 1,

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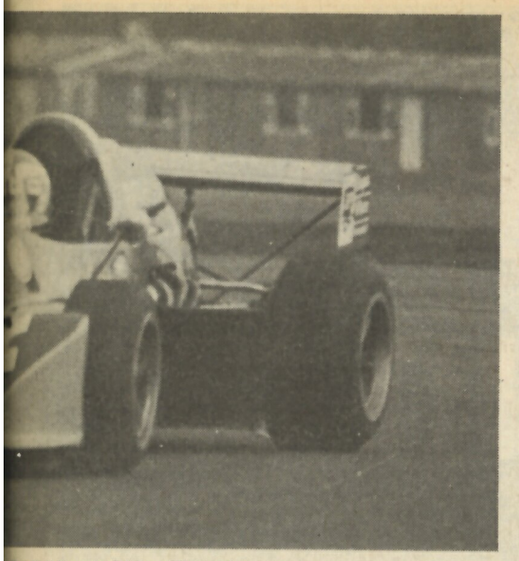

BAF March 743 at Thruxton.

The rest of the Clubman's cars during the opening lap.

Jim Walsh (Royale-Scholar RP21), 11m 55.4s, 94.85 mph; 2, David Heale (Reynard-Rowland 75), 11m 59.2s; 3, Dave Buttigieg (Dulon-Rowland MP17), 11m 59.8s; 4, Derek Warwick (Hawke-Scholar DL15), 12m 00.0s; 5, Clive Power (Dulon-Newbridge MP15), 12m 08.0s; 6, Peter Orlando (Dastle-Longman Mk11/16), 12m 13.4s. **Fastest lap:** Walsh, 1m 28.0s, 96.38 mph.

BARC Modified Sports championship round. Overall and over 2000cc class (8 laps): 1, Jonathan Palmer (3.0 Marcos-Ford V6 GT), 12m 32.2s, 90.21 mph; 2, Simon Packford (1.0 Davrian-Chrysler Mk7), 12m 37.0s; 3, Ian Hall (1.4 MiniJem-Leyland Mk 2), 12m 37.0s; 4, Dave Bettinson (1.6 Lotus-Ford Super 7), 13m 06.0s. **Up to 1150 cc class:** 1, Packford, 89.63 mph; 2, Pat Longhurst (1.0 Davrian-Chrysler Mk8); 3, Gary Morse (1.0 Clan-Chrysler Crusader). **Fastest lap:** Packford, 1m 32.4s, 91.79mph. **1151 to 1500cc class:** 1, Hall, 89.63 mph; 2, Keith Ashby (1.3 MG Midget); 3, Graeme Dodd (1.3 MG Midget). **Fastest lap:** Hall, 1m 31.8s, 92.39 mph. **1501 to 2000cc class:** 1, Bettinson, 86.33 mph; 2, Mark Hales (1.6 Turner-Ford Mk3). No other finishers. **Fastest lap:** Bettinson, 1m 35.6s, 88.72 mph. **Over 2000cc class:** 1, Palmer; 2, Bob Neville (3.5 MGB GT V8); 3, Tony Wingrove (2.7 Porsche 911/Carrera). **Fastest lap:** Palmer, 1m 30.8s, 93.41 mph.

Forward Trust 1000 Special Saloon championship round. Overall and 851 to 1000cc class (8 laps): 1, John Homewood (1.0 Sunbeam Imp), 12m 45.0s, 88.70 mph; 2, Ginger Marshall (1.0 Austin Mini Countryman), 12m, 47.6s; 3, Brian Prebble (1.0 Hillman Imp), 12m 52.2s; 4, Andy Holloway (1.0 Sunbeam Imp), 13m 04.2s. **Fastest lap:** Prebble, 1m 32.2s, 91.99 mph. **Up to 850cc class:** 1, Roger Gill (850 Hillman Imp), 13m 23.2s, 84.48 mph) 2, Mike Kirby (850 Chrysler Imp); 3, Jeff Gilkes (850 BL Mini). **Fastest lap:** Gill, 1m 38.6s, 86.02 mph.

Formule Libre (8 laps): 1, Val Musetti (2.0 March-Swindon Ford BDX 74B), 10m 21.4s, 109.19 mph; 2, John Wingfield (2.0 Ralt-Somers Ford BDG R11), 11m 23.4s; 3, "The Streaker" (1.6 Lotus-Holbay Ford 35), 7 laps; 4, Dick Mallock (1.6 Mallock U2-Holbay Ford Mk 16E), 7 laps. **Fastest lap:** Musetti, 1m 16.2s, 111.31 mph (**new record**).

Formula Ford (7 laps): 1, David Toye (Royale-Minister RP21), 11m 18.0s, 87.57 mph; 2, John Scannell (Merlyn-Piper Mk 11A), 11m 24.0s; 3, Peter Ramelle (Mistrale-Rowland), 11m 38.4s; 4, Grant Wilson (Elden-Minister Mk10). **Fastest lap:** Toye and Scannell, 1m 34.6s, 89.66 mph.

OULTON PARK

Musetti starts the right way

MCD's 1976 season got under way at Oulton Park for a change last Saturday on a cold and sunny afternoon before a large crowd. The new look Folly, aptly named Fosters in honour of the circuit's MD, seemed to affect proceedings little. There was one new lap record, by Dover dentist Peter Cooke in the Sytner of Nottingham Clubman's race, but otherwise the racing was lacklustre and suffered from the early season shortage of competitors. Val Musetti won the first round of the MCD's single-seater *formule libre* championship but was almost two seconds outside Ted Wentz's circuit record set with a smaller capacity Formula Atlantic Lola. John Ellison and the Mid Cheshire MRC were in charge as effeciently as ever.

So few were Super Vees that the bare half dozen were amalgamated with the non-championship Formula Ford 1600s and sent off 25s later. Just before half distance in the 15-lap race, 52-year-old London taxi driver Ronnie Grant (for whom Richard Scott was acting unpaid mechanic for the day) took his now yellow Taurus past the leading FF of Nigel Robinson and went on to win overall despite a fine chase by Bruce Venn in his familiar Elden. Fastest Super Vee lap went to Peter White in a new Royale RP19 entered by Mike Izzard Racing, the car still not yet fully sorted so that Peter had been occupied for many laps trying to pass Tim Keen, returning to racing after breaking a leg at Mallory Park last year in Ian Williams'. Supernova, which then slowed with valve trouble. Robinson's ex-Kelvin Hesketh Merlyn Mk 24 won the FF race easily from Janet McPherson's new Crosslé 30F and Barry Pigot's ancient Merlyn Mk 11A.

There was a resonable entry of 1-litre special saloons which now have their own national championship sponsored by Hitachi. Jeff Ward's low-line Imp looked favourite but the cars were kept on the grid too long after the warming-up lap, Jeff's tyres cooled down and he had a wild slide at Fosters when the race started. This caused the pursuing Derek Walker (Fiat 850-Ford) to spin and let Don Hardman into a brief second place with his Cooper S. The Fiat was soon back to second and challenging Ward whose car then began to misfire badly, finally expiring altogether on lap five. Into the lead went Walker chased not by Hardman, who had fuel pump problems, but by the evocative Austin A 40 of Peter Cartlidge, going better than ever. Now it was the Fiat's turn to hit trouble for the engine was losing oil, most of which found its way on to the A40's screen, and on the last lap Walker switched off and Cartlidge went past to win. Undaunted, Derek pushed his car the last 100 yards and qualified as a finisher in fifth overall. Winner of the 850 class of three was the rare-sounding two-cylinder (sic!) Mini of Peter Day (see *Sports Extra*) from Clifford Watts (Imp) whose "bastard throttle stuck".

1975 B sport champion Nick Adams looks well set to carry on in the fully modified Clubmen's category where he left off last year for he took his new U2 Mk 18 straight into the lead of the Frank Sytner-sponsored championship round as fellow front row men, Peter Cooke in the new Harrison, and Ruari Gillies (Gryphon) scrabbled for adhesion. In no time at all Cooke had sorted himself out, passed Adams at Lodge on lap two, and thereafter eased further and further ahead, breaking Geoff Friswell's lap record in the process. Adams felt his diff beginning to break up, eased off, and on the very last lap lost second place to a hard-charging David Orbell (U2 Mk 11B/16) who had been a lowly seventh on lap one. Hot on the heels of Adams at the end was another ex-B sport exponent, Chris Greville-Smith, whose orange Phantom looks like being just as effective in its new Swindon-powered form. Gillies never fully recovered from a spin at Lodge on the second lap and ended up sixth, a lap behind and separated from Greville-Smith by the Ardmore Racing team mate of Nick Adams, Ceighton Brown, in his updated U2 Mk 17B which was suffering carburation problems with its new downdraught Tim Close engine. Vernon Davies was back with his U2, now yellow and updated to Mk 16 spec, but a plethora of problems, culminating in the water pump pulley coming off, sent him into the pits from fourth place.

Possibly because of its late announcement and ignorance of its existence the MCD answer to Silverstone's Jaybrand championship (there's more prize money, folks, like £500 per race) attracted a moderate entry including numerous FF1600 makeweights. The latter were responsible for the elimination of Bob Howlings' ex-Tony Dean Chevron B28 on the first lap of practice when a corner was bent at Fosters (the FF escaped more or less unscathed) while Val Musetti's F2 March used up one of its three nosecones avoiding similar machinery at Old Hall. Alo Lawler rubbished a nose cone too on his Formula Atlantic Chevron B29 but never made the race anyway because the oil pressure took a dive on the second warming-up lap. The first had already accounted for Robin Darlington's return to racing with the revamped Kincraft which left just one FF on the back of the grid.

Although John Wingfield's F2 Ralt RT1 led for the first few yards, Musetti had the March ahead coming out of Old Hall and immediately pulled well away. Then on the fifth lap he saw part of the alloy blanking for one of the side-mounted radiators coming off. Thinking he had time in hand, Val popped into the pits, the offending metal was ripped off, and he tried to rejoin only to find the pit lane lights against him because of passing backmarkers already lapped. Wingfield went past before Musetti was underway again but the Ralt led for only two laps before the red March, with its Swindon BDX engine, was back in front. "Wingers" never fell far behind after that, and indeed made one or two bids to pass at Fosters but Musetti "always insisted on his rights" and the March stayed ahead to the flag. Almost exactly a minute behind the two leaders came Nick Whiting after a quiet acclimatisation race in the ex-John Watson F1 Surtees TS16 destined for Divina. Ronnie Grant was an impressive fourth, only one lap behind in his Super Vee Taurus but of the rest, the less said, the better: they should have been in another race.

One of the largest entries of 1300 cc special saloons ever seen (there were no less than 22 of them) failed to make the first round of the 1976 Simoniz championship sparkle. Leader all the way was Tony Sugden from the over 1300 cc class in his perennial Brook Hire Escort BDE but he was coming under increasing pressure from the Minis of Peter Baldwin and Freddy Heaney when the latter two touched at Fosters and both rolled over. Heaney, who had been badly delayed by Gerry Gough's spinning Cooper S at the first corner, had been catching Baldwin at the time but fortunately escaped unharmed from his badly bent car. This left Tony Westbrook's Cooper S dominating the class although he was passed near the end by Nick Whiting's new Escort, running with the BDG from the ex-Alex Poole Skoda and a vibrating prop shaft, but increasing its pace as the race progressed.

IAN TITCHMARSH

Volkswagen Formula Super Vee Silver Cup Championship round (15 laps): 1, Ronnie Grant (Taurus-Head M24), 16m 28.4s, 90.36 mph; 2, Bruce Venn (Elden-Heidegger PH14), 16m 29.0s; 3, Peter White (Royale-Norvic RP19), 16m 36.2s; 4, Tim Keen (Supernova-Daghorn BH5), 16m 40.6s; 5, Glenn Wallis (GRW Kaimann), 13 laps; 6, Mike Eaton (Supernova Tui BH3), 12 laps. **Fastest lap:** White, 1m 3.6s, 93.62 mph.

Formula Ford 1600 (15 laps): 1, Nigel Robinson (Merlyn-Minister Mk 24), 17m 51.0s, 83.39 mph; 2, Janet McPherson (Crosslé-Minister 30F), 17m 57.6s; 3, Barry Pigot (Merlyn-Brown Mk 11A), 17m 58.8s. **Fastest lap:** Pigot, 1m 9.8s, 85.31 mph.

Hitachi Special Saloon Car Championship round (15 laps): 1, Peter Cartlidge (1.0 Austin A40-Ford), 18m 27.6s, 80.63 mph; 2, George Hard (1.0 Mini-Cooper S), 19m 25.2s; 3, Mike Beckett (1.0 Ford Anglia); 4, Peter Day (850 Mini-Clubman BDA), 19m 38.6s. **851 to 1000 cc class:** 1, Cartlidge, 80.63 mph; 2, Hard; 3, Beckett. **Lastest lap:** Cartlidge, 1m 12.2s, 82.47 mph. **Up to 850 cc class:** 1, Day, 75.78 mph; 2, Clifford Watts (848 Hillman Imp); only finishers. **Fastest lap:** Day and Watts, 1m 16.6s, 77.73 mph.

Sytner of Nottingham Clubman's Sports Championship round (15 laps): 1, Peter Cooke (Harrison-Cosworth Mk 7B), 15m 38.3s, 95.13 mph; 2, David Orbell (Mallock U2-Holbay Mk 11B/16), 16m 11.6s; 3, Nick Adams (Mallock U2-Davron Mk 18), 16m 13.0s; 4, Chris Greville-Smith (Phantom-Swindon P76), 16m 13.4s; 5, Creighton Brown (Mallock U2-Close Mk 17B), 16m 35.4s; 6, Ruari Gillies (Gryphon-Holbay C4A), 14 laps. **Fastest lap:** Cooke, 1m 0.8s, 97.93 mph (record).

MCD Open Single-Seater Championship round (20 laps): 1, Val Musetti (F2 March-Swindon 752 BDX), 21m 0.8s, 94.45 mph; 2, John Wingfield (F2 Ralt-Somers RT1 BDG), 21m 1.6s; 3, Nick Whiting (F1 Surtees-Cosworth TS16 DFV), 22m 1.8s; 4, Ronnie Grant (FSV Taurus-Head M24), 19 laps; 5, Janet McPherson (FF1600 Crosslé-Minister 30F), 18 laps; 6, David Winstanley (FA5 Brabham, Eden BT40 BDA), 18 laps. **Fastest lap:** Musetti, 58.6s, 101.6 mph.

Simoniz Special Saloon Car Championship round (15 laps): 1 Tony Sugden (1.8 Ford Escort BDE), 18m 44.4s, 79.44 mph; 2, Nick Whiting (2.0 Ford Escort BDG), 19m 3.6s; 3, Tony Westbrook (1.3 Mini-Cooper S), 19m 17.6s; 4, Bob Morey (1.3 Mini-Cooper S).

Over 1300 cc class: 1, Sugden, 79.44 mph; 2, Whiting; only finishers. **Fastest lap:** Whiting, 1m 9.6s, 85.55 mph. **1001 to 1300 cc class:** 1, Westbrook, 77.15 mph; 2, Morey; 3, Gordon Taylor (1.3 Mini-Cooper S). **Fastest lap:** Freddy Heaney (1.3 Mini-Cooper S), 1m 12.2s, 82.47 mph.

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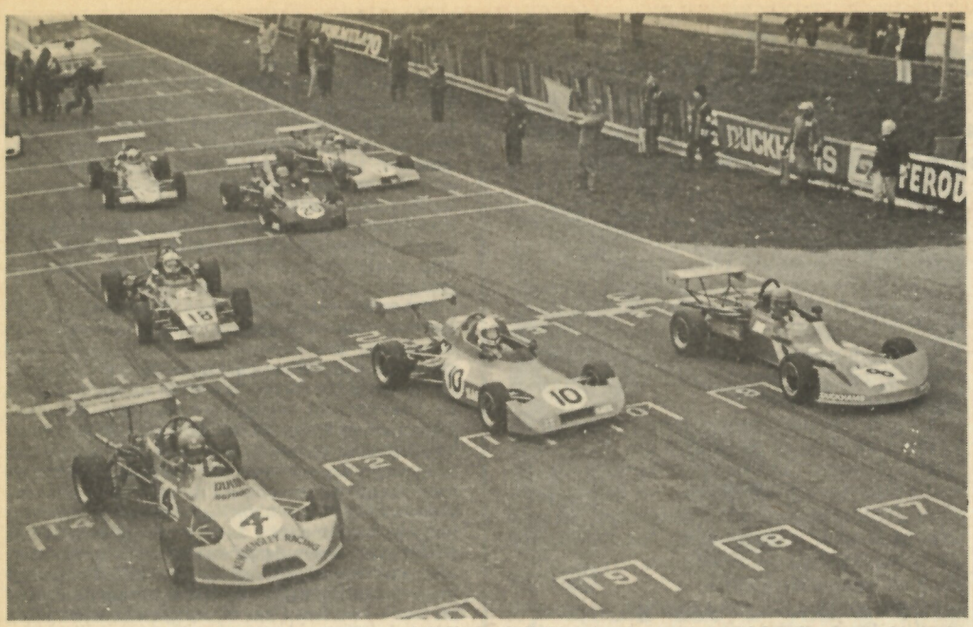


Ian Taylor (Dulon), Richard Piper (Sark) and Tiff Needell (Hawke) leave the grid for the start of an epic FF2000 race.

BRANDS HATCH

Brunt wins Radio 1 opener

Brands Hatch's crowded 1976 season got under way in fine style on Sunday when the BRSCC were in charge of the BBC Radio One Championship race meeting. Conditions were far from ideal; an icy wind, flurries of snow, and one very hard shower delaying morning's practice, plus the fact that work was still in progress on the new sections of the track, made things quite difficult for competitors. Mike Blanchet opened the scoring in this year's major FF championship, sponsored by Townsend Thoresen, by taking a runaway victory as his pursuers fell off, all three FF1600 races being very close and extremely hairy at times. Eric Cook, Danny Alderton, Derrick Brunt and Jeff Allam won their classes in the Radio One Production Saloon Car series, the latter two by default as class winners Phil Dowsett and Win Percy were disqualified, their cars being underweight (See Sports Extra). A good idea, and one that worked well was tried at the end of practice. Every car taking part was ordered up to the startline, and the good sized crowd were invited on to the track to take a closer look and chat to the drivers, Mike Smith also doing well by keeping everyone informed as to what exactly was going on every minute of the day.

Dutchman Kees van de Grint put his aging Palliser on pole for the first Townsend Thoresen championship heat, but it was that little old campaigner Mike Blanchet who led this one from start to finish in his Minister-engined Lotus 61M. John Poxon's Setyres Crossle 25F kept the Lotus within its sights, but he was joined dramatically on the last lap by Rob Wicken's Merlyn Mk 17A and they crossed the line side by side, Poxon just getting the verdict.

It's good to see BBC Radio One involved with MCD again this year and they had two races for the Production Saloon Car Championship. The first, for the two cheaper classes, saw that famous blue Mazda RX3 on pole. However, Jock Robertson has moved on to greater things, and its now in the hands of John Brindley and sponsored by Brindley Fabrics. It was a full two seconds quicker than Peter Slade's RX2 and Eric Cook's RX3 in the wet practice, but it was the RX2 that got the best start to lead after a lap. Brindley dropped to third on lap 3 behind Cook who immediately started to haul in Slade. Cook got inside Cook's Arian International car at Paddock and the winner of the race was in no doubt thereafter. Ivan Dutton's Century Oils RX2 held fourth from the first to the last lap byt Ray Tunney's Mexico stole the place on the last half of the lap. The small class provided the most excitement, with Danny Alderton's Rallye Auto Sport/Trafalgar Motors Honda Civic and Peter Jopp's Mini 1275GT spinning to the tail of the field at Kidney on the first lap. By half distance the Honda was leading its class again and after some paint swopping with the Mini it finally got the verdict but both were given the same race time. Afterwards Slade was disqualified for being 55 lbs underweight.

Rory Byrne must have been pleased to see three Royale RP21s on the front row for the second Formula Ford heat in the form of Howard Drake, John Bright and Geoff Smailes. However, Drake retired after a couple of slow laps after a bump at the start damaged a wheel. This left Bright, Smailes and Rick Morris' Oceanair Hawke to contend the lead, and what a hairy old battle it was too. It was settled in Bright's favour when Smailes and Morris collided coming down from Druids on lap 7, this giving Bright just enough breathing space to win by 0.4s from the South African. Nick Orford's Merlyn Mk 20A broke away from another group to finish third ahead of another Royale, the RP21 of Trevor van Rooyen.

Win Percy used Bill Sydenham's Samuri Racing Toyota Celica GT to good effect in the damp practice to put it on pole for the two bigger classes in the BBC Radio One Production Saloon Car Championship. Unfortunately it was dry for the race, and it was Phil Dowsett's Industrial Control Services Capri which came storming through from the second row to lead at Paddock. Rob Saunders' Triumph Dolomite Sprint was chasing hard, but he was getting the Dollie at some awkward angles at Druids, and finally half spun at the hairpin on the fifth lap allowing Ivan Dutton's Century Oils Capri through. He only got as far as Kidney before he had a big spin, the Capri completely disappearing in a cloud of blue rubber smoke. Saunders was back in to second but only for another lap before he completely overcooked it at Druids and the Toyota took over second after generally swopping places with Rod Birley's Hometune Capri and Derrick Brunt's Industranised Mechanised Products 3.0 BMW Si. On the tenth lap and with five to go the big BMW did the Toyota as did Birley a lap later, while Saunders also moved up at the expense of Percy on lap 12 having recovered from his spin. Brunt just managed to stay ahead of the Capri, but on the last lap the Dolomite squeezed by the Ford at Druids, and in another side by side finish, BL got the judges' decision. However at post race scrutineering, Dowsett's Capri was found to be 60 lbs underweight and Percy's Toyota was also under the prescribed limit, and Peter Browning disqualified both. Thus Brunt was overall winner and Jeff Allam's Vauxham Magnum won the smaller class having got the better of the similar cars of Nick Whiting and Gerry Marshall.

Only nine Formula Ford 2000s could be raised for their first race of the season, a non-championship affair sponsored by Polydor Records. Ian Taylor's Ken Hensley Racing Dulon led from pole but he was penalised 10s for jumping the gun. He had 20 laps though to pull out that advantage, and judging by practice times he might have done it. However, Tiff Needell, in Bob McKinstry's Hawke had other ideas, and he stuck to the Dulon's tail just biding his time. In fact he left it right until the last one hundred yards of the race when he slipped out of Taylor's slipstream on the run to the chequered flag to win by half a length. Really the best win of the day in the most boring race. Taylor was far enough ahead of Richard Riper's attractive Sark to finish second as the latter had a lumpy front trye.

Ann Moore made her single seater debut in a blaze of publicity. She drove her Elden to team orders from the back row avoiding errors to get her final signature to get an international licence. She finished last, two laps behind the winner, but still got that signature.

Escort Mexico racing is going to be just as good this year, if Sunday's race is anything to go by. With a new sponsor in the form of Debenhams, most of last year's regulars were on the grid plus one or two new names to this class. It was a 'New Face' who stole all the glory in the form of one Wayne Wainwright having only his third race in the ex-Thompson car. He took the lead from Derek Speight on the third lap and soon pulled out a couple of seconds on the following train of Escort Mexicos. Pete King in Ronnie Scott's car caught him towards the end but Wainwright kept his cool and even survived a typical Mexico nudge from King at Druids to win by a length, although both were given the same race time. Bob Fox finished a second behind King, while the next seven cars were covered by 2.4s. Good stuff again.

If the heats were anything to go by the Townsend Thoresen final was going to be a cracker. It was close for two thirds of the race, but somewhat spoilt by some erratic driving. Even before the pack had gone 100 yards there were cars flying in all directions. Miraculously no one retired in the melee, but it seriously delayed Philip Bullman's Crossle David McLelland's Nike, Tony Dixon's Caterham Auto Accessories/Scarletts Elden, and Wil Arif's Brookside Garden Centre Crossle.

After leading for the first lap, John Bright dropped a couple of places on the second to Mike Blanchet and Nick Orford. The little Jerseyman's job was made easier on the third lap when Rob Wicken tried to get inside Bright at Paddock. It didn't come off and they collided which eliminated both of them. The vain chase was now led by Trevor van Rooyen's Royale, but the old Lotus was pulling away all the time. Things were so close behind Blanchet that something had to give, and on lap 8 Geoff Smailes took off John Wybourn and John Poxon at Kidney which really split up the field completely. David Kennedy's Crossle 30F was left in a comfortable second place albeit nearly ten seconds behind the winner, while Van Rooyen, Orford and Matthew Argenti's Macinnes Amcron Van Dieman all closed up in the end to finish in that order. 'Percy' Arif recovered well to complete the points scorers.

PAUL KING.

Townsend Thoresen Formula Ford 1600 Championship, Heat 1 (10 laps): 1, Mike Blanchet (Lotus-Minister 61M), 9m 08.2s, 81.43 mph; 2, John Poxon (Crossle-Minister 25F), 9m 10.8s; 3, Rob Wicken (Merlyn-Minister Mk 17A), 9m 10.8s; 4, Robert Coates (Hawke-Minister DL12), 9m 11.4s. **Fastest lap:** David Kennedy (Crossle-Minister 30F), 52.2s, 85.52 mph.

Heat 2 (10 laps): 1, John Bright (Royale-Minister RP21), 9m 04.0s, 82.06 mph; 2, Geoff Smailes (Royale-Scholar RP21), 9m 04.4s; 3, Nick Orford (Merlyn-Minister Mk 20A), 9m 08.4s; 4, Trevor Van Rooyen (Royale-Minister RP21), 9m 11.0s. **Fastest lap:** Smailes, 52.6s, 84.87 mph.

Final (15 laps): 1, Blanchet, 13m 25.4s, 83.14 mph; 2, Kennedy, 13m 34.6s; 3, Van Rooyen, 13m 38.0s; 4, Orford, 13m 38.4s; 5, Matthew Argenti (Van Diemen-Scholar RF76), 13m 38.4s; 6, Wil Arif (Crossle-Piper 25F), 13m 44.0s. **Fastest lap:** David McClelland (Nike), 52.4s, 85.19 mph.

BBC Radio One Production Saloon Car Championship £1601 to £2000 and up to £1600 (15 lap): Overall and £1601 to £2000: 1, Eric Cook (2.0 Mazda RX3), 15m 51.8s, 70.35 mph; 2, John Brindley (2.0 Mazda RX3), 16m 02.8s; 3, Ray Tunney (1.6 Ford Escort Mexico), 16m 36.0s; 4, Ivan Dutton (2.0 Mazda RX2), 16m 36.0s. **Fastest lap:** Cook, 1m 02.2s, 71.77 mph. **Up to £1600 class:** 1, Danny Alderton (1.2 Honda Civic), 65.43 mph; 2, Peter Jopp (1.3 BLMS Mini 1275 GT), Rodney Poser (1.3 Simca Rallye 1). **Fastest lap:** Jopp, 1m 05.4s, 68.26 mph.

Radio One Production Saloon Car Championship over £2401 and £2001 to £2400 (15 laps); Overall and over £2401 class: 1, Derrick Brunt (3.0 BMW si), 15m 54.8s, speed not given; 2, Bob Saunders (2.0 Triumph Dolomite Sprint), 15m 55.8s; 3, Rod Birley (3.0 Ford Capri), 15m 55.8s; 4, Jeff Allam (2.3 Vauxhall Magnum), 16m 03.0s. **Fastest lap:** Brunt and Ivan Dutton (2.0 Ford Capri), 1m 02.0s, 72.00 mph. **£2001 to £2400 class:** 1, Allam, speed not given; 2, Nick Whiting (2.3 Vauxhall Magnum); 3, Gerry Marshall (2.3 Vauxhall Magnum). **Fastest lap:** Allam and Win Percy (1.6 Toyota Celica GT) (disqualified), 1m 02.8s, 71.08 mph.

Polydor Records/Doctors of Madness Trophy Formula Ford 2000 race (20 laps): 1, Tiff Needell (Hawke-Holbay DL14), 16m 52.0s, 88.22 mph; 2, Ian Taylor (Dulon-Nelson Pinto MP18), 17m 02.0s; 3, Richard Piper (Sark-Rowland), 17m 08.2s; 4, John Blackwell (Ray-Scholar FF 276), 19 laps; 5, Roger Orgee (Elden-Close Mk 18), 19 laps; 6, Robert Cooper, (Merlyn-Cooper Mk 28), 19 laps. **Fastest lap:** Taylor and Needell, 49.6s, 90.00 mph.

Debenhams Ford Escort Challenge (10 laps): 1, Wayne Wainwright, 10m 42.6s, 69.47 mph; 2, Pete King 10m 42.6s; 3, Bob Fox, 10m 43.6s; 4, Graham Hollis, 10m 49.4s. **Fastest lap:** David Taylor, 1m 02.0s, 72.00 mph.

So, you want some money?

IAN SADLER blows the cobwebs off his IN tray and discovers, among other things, a twilight zone of chancers and beggars . . .

Dear Sir, *I should like to bring to the attention of your Publicity Department my offer of promoting your fine products in the field of international sporting competition – a field where I am sure Gummy Rusks should be represented.*

To introduce myself to you: I am a semi-professional rally driver and have lived in Pratborough for several years (opposite your factory). Last year I won my club's Most Promising Newcomer of the Year Award, and that after only being involved in active competing for 11 years. Since this award I have been asked to speak at a Pratborough Speed Shop Forum and a brief article outlining my career to the top has appeared in the Pratborough Bugle (photocopy enclosed – apologies for slightly grubby condition).

This year I am planning to enter the Inter-County Regional North Western Special Stage Rally Championship (I.C.R.N.W.S.S.R.C.) and as many international events as my schedule will allow. I have taken the liberty of enclosing a small snapshot of my car which, in case the slight blurr makes it unclear, is a Ford Escort "TC", fully prepared to latest specification and similar, in configuration, to that driven by Roger Clark. I have owned this famous ex-Ford development car for the past seven years and can safety claim that it is fully sorted, and extremely quick. Recent results include 78th place (22nd in class) on the National Pratborough Stages and never having dropped below 166th position on the '71 RAC Rally before retiring on the tough SS2 section.

As can be ascertained from the windscreen strip (top of picture), I am a member of the famous "Team Avon Tyres" equipe and I also have a small amount of backing from Pratborough Speed Shop; the people who look after my car and who are highly skilled specialists, retailing mainly off-the-shelf accessory items.

I feel sure that Gummy Rusks will benefit greatly from sponsoring my car for the coming season – which started only three months ago – and a figure in the region of £5,000 would ensure your name international prestige. This is less than the cost of 52 page advertisements in the Bugle. The RAC Rally, which I plan to enter once I receive the special licence, is watched by more than two million people and is also written about in the Mirror. I eagerly await your favourable reply. **Your faithfully,** Baloon-foot Bodine.

The rush to be supported

Not a week goes by without a press release arriving on the office desk announcing a sponsorship deal of some magnitude or other. Usually we have quite a selection residing in the IN tray, come Friday. More often than not they are announcements from unknowns, proclaiming deals with obscure businesses in distant parts for undisclosed purposes. Very often an accompanying photograph will show proposed driver and co-driver smiling happily and sitting on the vehicle's front wings in a pose reminiscent of a Rootes Group works-team handout picture of the late '60s. Closer scrutiny often reveals evidence of a quick "blow-over" paint spray, hiding the wrinkled panels; and if the photographer has taken a few moments lingering over his composition, there will be the glossy black evidence large puddle of oil gathering between the front wheels.

Pressure of space more often than not forbids us to print these pictures, though we would frequently have to publish about three solid pages of such new-sponsor illustrations in order not to discriminate. It is predictable that there will not be much inside the envelope to impress. We hope a different style of release is sent to local and national papers, and we would like to think that the majority of the lucky sponsored drivers will back up their deal, at least with a personal visit and some follow-up material. We seldom see more than the announcement. Perhaps we are struck-off the mailing list if we fail to publish on the first one. No doubt in the great rush to have a name on the car, and therefore to be a "somebody," it is expected that their deal will make news and provide the sporting weeklies with an interesting topic or two. Unfortunately, this is a misconception. Ninety-nine per cent of these well meaning amateur press releases are so tediously alike that they could all have been written by the same person.

Either the majority of drivers obtaining some low-key but worthwhile financial help are completely unimaginative . . . or they have delusions of grandeur. Of course, people who drive flat through the forests *are* short on imagination, so the second suggested reason for this phenomenon looks to be worth a little further investigation. It seems to fit with this behaviour. Is a single scant sheet of information, plus an accompanying picture, of much value to the sponsor? Not in our book, nor our competitors' to judge from their pages. To digress for a moment — at this point we must pay tribute to a gentleman who sent us the standard bits, but had livened-up his presentation with a contrived action picture of his car — two feet clear of the ground and sailing over a public road junction! Perhaps we should have printed that one.

One can conclude from this never ending stream of minor press releases that there are many small and middling businesses up and down the country receiving a pretty poor return from rallying. What sort of deal are some of these people receiving . . . are many of them throwing money away and swearing 'never again'. One major automotive company we spoke with confirmed some of our fears. They received "many hundreds" of letters. Most of these they described as "dismal". A number of requests were no more than begging letters for cash. Others treated the idea of sponsorship as a favour owed. Most appear to adopt the wrong approach with this company and many do not even broach the subject of return on investment and similar business "details".

A contract — what is required?

Perhaps it is something to do with the relative newness of special stage rallying, or the brash, eager, participants it attracts . . . for somehow a great number of drivers think that they are owed a living — just that! Maybe, because it involves

A man who eats sponsors for breakfast? – not so, Andy Dawson comes up with some "amazing" deals but he always provides a two-way benefit.

motor cars and is not too far removed from Formula 1 motor racing to make any sense, a keen ego can bridge the gap. Or, perhaps rally cars are impossible to control if they are without sign writing, due to the driver being overcome with depression and inferiority complexes. What ever the reasons — it is a complete fallacy. To suppose that because you have spent money to equip yourself with a vehicle to go roaring over the stages in, you qualify to be paid is quite illogical. Rallying is supposed to be, number one, a sport, and only the most highly skilled, accomplished sportsmen can ever expect to be paid. The best British rally drivers are sponsored to go rallying; very, very, few will make any profit. Castrol are one of the country's biggest supporters of rallying and the names on their "books" includes Russell Brookes, Tony Fowkes, George Hill, Will Sparrow and Jim McRae (The DTV involvement); while lesser involvements — directly or indirectly — include Erik Aaby, Jill Robinson, Pentti Airikkala, Barry Lee, Tony Fall, Tony Drummond, DOT and Leyland ST. Further down the list come Bernard Banning, Gordon Batchelor, Jan Churchill, Paul Faulkner, Richard Iliffe, David Lang, David Stokes and Robert James. All these drivers and teams are already proven to be capable of offering a return on investment . . . . yet Castrol threatens to be buried under a pile of begging letters from un-proven unknowns.

By all means let us keep and encourage commercial support — but let us have this welcome involvement at the top end of the sport and not encourage all and sundry to grab anything going, with very little regard to the longer-term.

To be supported, obviously the driver must be reasonably proficient (not that he needs to be especially skilled) but, most important, he must

Could you attract this level of interest?

justify his support. It is not enough just to be seen on rallies with an impressive livery on the car. He must strive to maintain good relations with the local papers and take time to assist his sponsor promotionally, whether that be on a factory floor or wet forecourt. It helps to develop a style and ease for public speaking and to adopt, at all times, a courteous, easy-going, frame of mind. Out-of-event activity is important to the sponsor and often the car can be of lesser consequence than the stories it will create as an advertising vehicle. Once decided on a policy of sponsorship you cease being your own boss and "just a driver". You become a raconteur, a crafty politician, a dazzling media man. You must adapt to the plans of others and, above all, you must work to provide a deal that is of advantage to both parties. If not, you might just be another one-release-wonder.

Keeping a sponsor

Now, it is over to Russell Brookes to show how its done: not just the driving, the negotiating too. At the tail end of 1971 Russell had no money left in the kitty. His borrowed engine had to be handed back; he had sold his private car and other valued possessions. He had to cycle around — or catch a bus. All that was left after the RAC Rally was the patched-up shell of what had started life as a Mini in 1961, and was now more suitable as accommo-

"I would ask a young chap going for, say £1,000 sponsorship from a company to think — am I going to give them £1,000 profit? To do that I'll need to create five or six thousand pounds extra business to generate that £1,000. No one owes me a living and I can't justify that sponsorshp merely by going rallying."

dation for the chickens. Five years later — now — Russell has a full house forest Escort 2 supplied to him by the works and a second "tarmac" Escort 2 nearing completion of build. He receives technical assistance from Ford and Dunlop and he receives cash to run the cars from the Andrews Group of Companies and from Castrol.

Russell has done it all through sponsors (he will use the word "luck" as well) and by holding the right attitudes and demonstrating high integrity Russell doesn't make any profit, but he does enjoy being right at the top of the programme he has so far set for himself. How does he keep a sponsor, who is supporting him to the tune of many thousands of pounds, in a satisfied frame of mind? "I follow my sponsors' requests — and include some off my own bat. I'll be doing six or seven Andrews forums, for their customers and staff at their different branches. In one year I'll also do 25 to 30 other forums . . . and be a guest speaker at dinners . . ." Russell adds such additional, but important work, as taking local journalists out to sample a forest stage and liaising Andrews and Castrol promotions. Indeed, John Andrews is soon to find out about the driving side of his deal with Russell, when he sits in the hot seat on the forthcoming Poachers MC Uniflo Rally; this event chosen, typically, as the proceeds (from sponsored stages etc) will be going to charity.

Andrews have supported Brookes now for three seasons and each year they have trebled their financial stake. Obviously they are pleased with their involvement, and they use it wisely. The sort of thing we don't so readily hear about is their tenth anniversary and the using of Russell's rally car as a vehicle to help unite the various branches around the country to give the company some extra cohesion; a common link between all with their "flag ship" rally car.

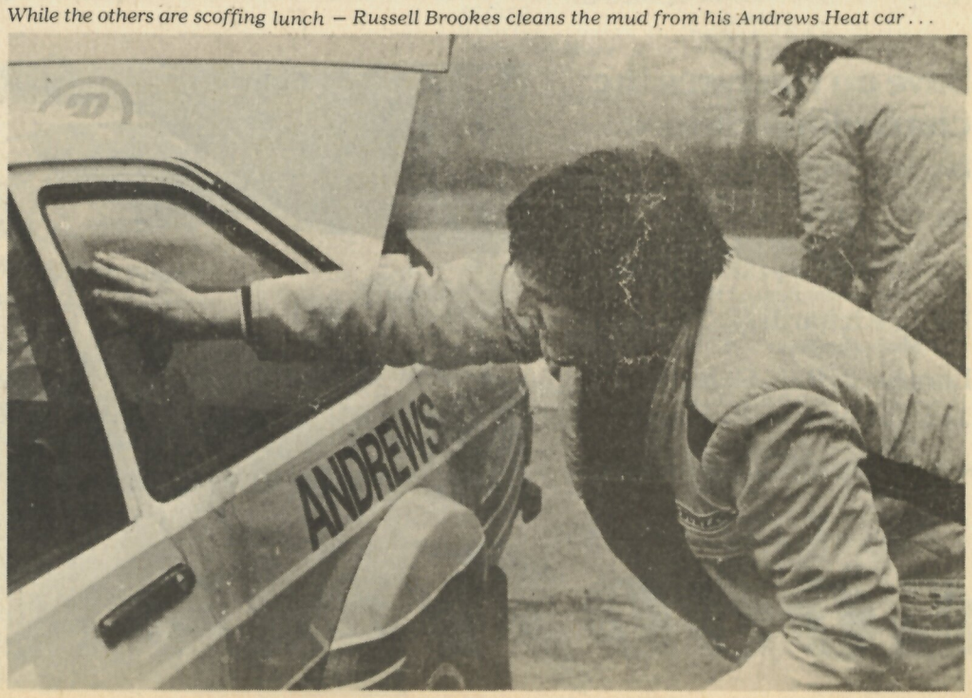
Russell Brookes will also mention others who have helped him with sponsorship — and the fact that they are all professionally involved further reinforces that very necessary word — integrity. Martin Holmes "Showed what it was all about, with such things as headed paper and a professional approach", when they tackled *MN* rallies for a season with Withers support. John Brown similarly, with Brooklyn, when he created what was the first of the now-popular "replica" cars, with the successful "Brooklyn Mexico", fifteen examples of which were sold; and Derek Hill who was instrumental with the Andrews involvement. The rest has been up to Brookes. How many drivers would consider producing their own brochure? Russell spent more than £200 creating a professionally printed four page pamphlet for circulation to likely organisations. This is surely the sort of thinking to create an advantageous aura of respectability.

Responsibilities

Russell Brookes is one of the few near professional rally drivers in Britain to whom the young coming-men can look – not just to match with speed – but to follow sound, above-board, examples of business sense. Since Russell was first supported, by Goodbrook Motors of Redditch (with whom he still maintains valuable links) he can count his sponsors on the fingers of one hand. In each case, he can confidently say that he has not fallen-out, or made enemies of, any of them. There are not many others with such a track record.

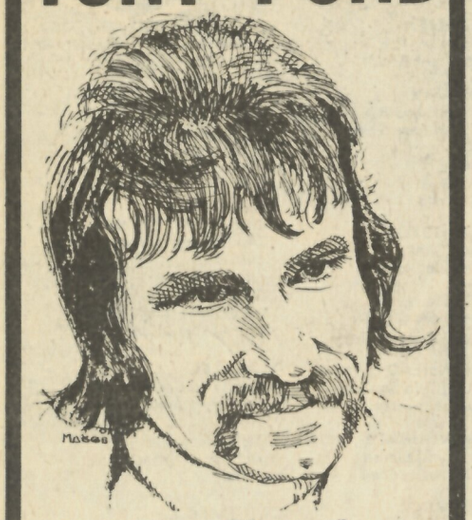
If it is your genuine wish you, too, could have a pair of works cars at your disposal in five years time. Just think long and hard before you jump on the band-wagon and remember your responsibilities and commitments. Sharks don't last long in rallying and neither do smalltime rip-off merchants. Any truly original press release and its follow-up material will not travel from the IN tray to the waste bin. It would be welcomed as an indicator that there is new talent coming with the necessary diplomacy, integrity and wits to make it to the top. A few hundred pounds and a heavy right foot is not enough.

While the others are scoffing lunch – Russell Brookes cleans the mud from his Andrews Heat car . . .



Высококачественная белая офисная бумага KLEPORC «БИЗНЕС»

TONY POND



...reflections

This week Tony looks at the controversial Mintex International and describes his experiences with the new Triumph TR7 on loose surfaces for the first time . . .

Perhaps enough has already been said about the Mintex fiacso. Suffice to say that most of the problems seem to rest with the competitors. There was far too much 'wheeling and dealing.' Cottam airfield should never have been scrubbed. We're supposed to be rally drivers which means we drive in all conditions; stages shouldn't be scrubbed merely because conditions are bad. What about the poor sods at the back of the field? A pal of mine running at number hundred and something told me that they were in Harwood Dale after dark and in the fog. We did Harwood Dale and then Dalby just after lunch in daylight and good visibility. Did the backmarkers want to scrub the stage? Once the organisers capitulated to the Cottam protests, they opened the floodgates immediately. To scrub a stage which does not merit the action is to fix your own results. The organisers have got to stand by their guns in this sort of case; there is so much at stake now that the people with most to lose are going to roughride straight through a weak authority. These days, regrettably, you simply don't win rallies until the protest period is over — which is an extremely depressing thought.

Highlights? What highlights?

My personal highlights of the Mintex are of rather limited interest because although we finished 10th overall and cleaned up in Group One again, there is precious little real satisfaction in that for me. Subjectively speaking, it's all rather a retrograde step in that I feel like I've gone back in the time scale about four years. The frustration of it all is made worse too because we have a car sitting back at the works in which I think we can take on the Fords at their own game. The waiting is becoming a very bad joke now but when the cars do appear I'm now certain they'll be fully competitive right away.

Once again though I was amazed by the Dolomite Sprint. It is so fast down the straights and so incredibly strong. The latter we found out in no uncertain terms when I clobbered Tony Fowkes' stationary car on one stage. The impact hardly marked the Triumph but it certainly gave Tony a real punch up the chuff! I had a few words with him about it afterwards—he beat me on the RAC so I had to get my own back somehow!

I remember Castle Howard as well; this was the scene for our 'big moment' of the rally. By the time the old Sprint drew up at the start line, the occupants were a little on the depressed side. You've no idea just how frustrating it is to be driving your heart out and still not appearing among the leaders. We were trying really hard and I had 'flu at the time and was feeling like death. The result of all these conditions meant that every crest was taken 'flat'! Better to die like this than in bed reading Barry McKenzie!

In retrospect I'm convinced that what we witnessed at Castle Howard was nothing more than a low-down fiendish Chrysler ploy designed to eliminate us. They chose for their devilish plan that most ruthlessly efficient weapon — the rally 'groupie' . . . we'd just reached the end of the long straight and were approaching a fast left when suddenly I caught sight of this rampant red-hot female, lolling over the fence licking her lips; breasts hanging out all over the place (you go so slowly in Group one cars that you have a good chance to see all these fine sights!) but to cut a long and embarrassing story short, we lost it in the biggest possible way and it took the poor frustrated pilot about 2½ miles to get the Dolly to go straight again! Mr Richards was breathing decidedly heavily down the intercom after that one — though whether at the lustful nubile sight we had just witnessed or as a result of my 'gnoming' is hard to tell.

Quick Culch . . .

Brian is really going quick now. Since he's got someone behind him in a Dolomite there is at last something for him to aim at. In former days I think it was a bit of a lonely feeling out there among the Fords. When he gets his hands on a TR7 he's really going to rattle the brain cells of a few old pundits' heads. There is no way that Brian is going to allow himself to be beaten by a Pond

Anticipation is running high in the ST camp with the TR7 imminently due for its debut. Team Captain Culch has serious words with Bill Price and Richard Seth-Smith.

but in the same context we are going to work as a team and I think this is where Leyland may score over the Ford runners. Team spirit is really good with us and Brian and I get on very well together; friendly rivalries, ribbing and all. Our policy is that if there's any way we can help each other, then that's the way things will be worked. Nothing like this happens at Ford. The situation there is deliberately divisive to keep the drivers on their mettle. They never discuss driver tactics and they can afford to get away with it because there is safety in numbers. But we can score by taking maximum advantage of radios, etc, to advise on such items as suitable tyres for a particular stage during an event. There is a deliberately induced friction in the Ford set-up but it doesn't exist at Leyland. I think that this may be where one of our strengths lie. The mechanics et al have come alive with the current situation because both Brian and I drive the cars virtually to destruction on every event, we are that determined! It is a great atmosphere to work with. When we get back home these days, the poor old cars need a total rebuild! "FRW's" last rally will be the Granite City and Brian reckons that he's going to give it a good swansong. God help them up in Scotland! He was trying so hard that after Ingleby he was spotted crouching down behind a hedge near the flying finish with his trousers round his ankles. When I went by, there he was, wide-eyed and red-faced peering over the top of the hedge like a half-naked leprechaun. Whether it was the call of nature or that he had just gone that little bit too quick, I don't know! Anyway he certainly got a fine fanfare for our lights and horn . . . Rev! Rev!

A2s or M&S?

On a more serious note, I have one or two reservations about A2s, at least for use on G1 cars and/or Dolomites. The problem is that the A2 is so violent when the driver gets off the edge of the road. It pulls the car into the ditches like a racing tyre, especially if conditions are a bit mushy. As soon as we changed to knobblies I found we could start taking the shortest lines round corners again, and suddenly we were three seconds a mile quicker.

With the A2 the driver just has to follow the road, he can't afford to go jumping in and out of the undergrowth. The Dolomite doesn't help either in this respect because with over four turns lock to lock you have a helluva lot of trouble getting the thing back on the island again; you can't just flick the wrist; it's more like altering course in the QE2! It's all a question of confidence really. The A2 forces the driver to stay on the crown of the road. Just what a difference a change to M&S made to us can be shown by comparing my times with Brian's. He was a minute up on us at the Flask Inn but we took 90 seconds back off him in four stages with M&S fitted to our machine. A2s worry me a bit, because they are either so right for the conditions or they are so wrong that things get silly. On the Mintex, A2s were definitely the wrong choice on a Dolomite and I think if Brian had used M&S earlier he would have finished higher than

A front suspension work-out for old "FRW" on the Mintex as Brian hits a rut during lat-late braking.

seventh. Mind you we never had a new set of A2s — they were always part worn before we got our hands on them. . . . The tyre situation was in fact desperate on the Mintex and had we been front runners then we would have been right out of it. But at least we are learning our lessons. It's best that we do our learning on Dolomites . . .

Seeds of doubt

When you go off nowadays, it's almost inevitably in a big way, because the speed is so high . . . I know that whenever I have had a shunt it has always taken me a time to get back to the kind of speeds I had been achieving before the big "moment". It always takes a while to readjust and start going quickly again and I wonder how long it will take Roger Clark to be superquick again? Roger has been on the crest of a wave for a helluva long time now. His performances have been sensational and as far as I'm concerned you can take all your Scandinavians, put 'em up against Roger and I reckon he is as good, if not better. Now he has had a shunt and I'll be interested to see just how long it takes him to get back up there. The older one gets, the more these things shake one up, and even though I know Roger's only 23 years old, these things must affect him! Knowing Roger, though, I think he'll take it by the scruff of the neck and go just as quick. I certainly hope that's the case, I am still waiting to have another go at beating him! The problems with a shunt, though, involve self-confidence. Roger drives with total conviction and once the seeds of hesitation and doubt have been sown, that's the time things start to go wrong. We desperately need Roger because there is still no one to replace him at present. Simply, he is still head and shoulders the best, and when he turns on the pressure his stage times are just out of this world . . . when he got the needle over the Stratos on the Mintex, for instance; his times in Dalby . . . WOW! This is what worries me a little, whether he can still pull out the stops like that, and there is no doubt that he was going to give the Stratos a few bars of the victory music down Ingleby, that's for certain. If he now goes back into extensive testing, then I'm sure he'll crack it straight away. But he is certainly going to need that legendary sixth gear of his with Pentti and Ari breathing down his neck. Besides, it's going to make a total farce of the British Rally Championship should it be won by a Finn. I don't imagine they'd take very kindly to some superquick "Brit" going to Finland to take their championship apart. It's great having them all here, but I wonder if they should score points?

Morale booster

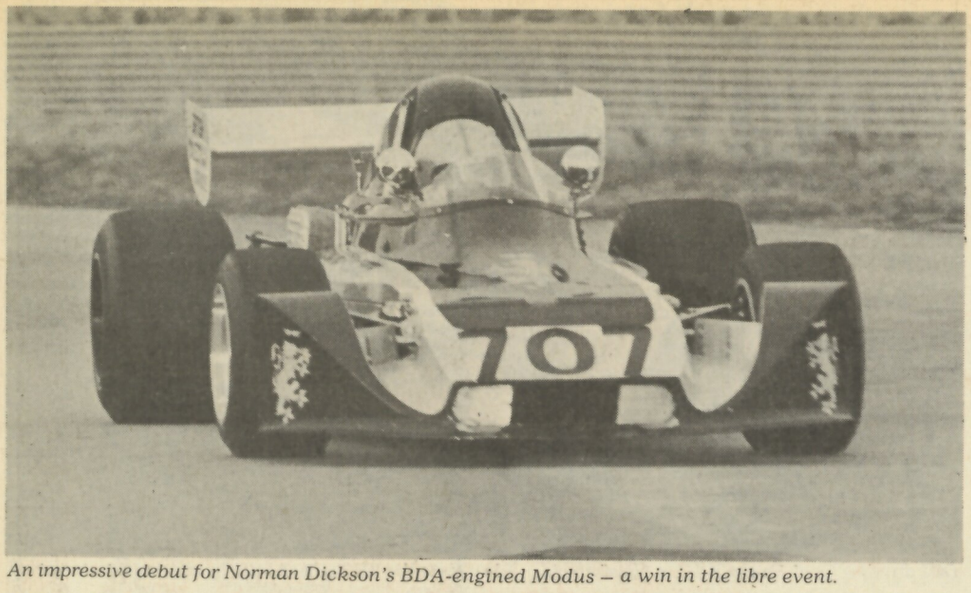
Perhaps the greatest morale booster to the Leyland team occurred last week when I took the TR7 out on the loose for the first time; we were only carrying out initial brake tests and sorting correct castor angle settings, etc, but the whole team really got into gear. The spirit has always been good but the wait has got everyone down, and the sight of the new car on the loose was really exciting. I think everyone was secretly afraid that it might not work at all with its short wheelbase and very wide track; I know I was. The fact that our initial experience was so successful just added to the euphoria. There is nothing like going out and getting to grips with the thing — giving it some stick. It was certainly a big lift for me after driving G1 which as far as I'm concerned is taking a step four years backwards. I'm totally convinced now that TR7 will work. Although the car is not fully sorted by any means, it is, even so, nothing short of sensational. The real forte, and perhaps this feature is the most important attribute on a rally car, is the ability to change direction smartly. TR7 accomplishes this so quickly, the feeling is almost uncanny. The confidence imparted is enormous. Some so-called authorities have been saying that the wheelbase is going to make it a useless machine. They will be in for a helluva big shock. This is part of the irony of rallying because very often things that shouldn't work on paper turn out to be brilliant in practice, and vice versa. The short wheelbase works, and works fantastically. You have to sit in the car to believe how fast it can change its attitude. It is superior to a Stratos in this respect because you are not throwing a hammer backwards, as it were. The weight of the Stratos flicks the car round so that it is not very accurate, but the TR7 is far more precise and you can change attitude on power or the brakes or a combination of both. All this in a car which has just been taken off the shop floor and driven in anger for the first time. One might expect it to understeer violently or do something wrong maybe. The TR7 simply has not done *anything* wrong. The way it drives is almost too good to be true. Bill (Pryce) and the lads were astounded. I don't mind soldiering on in G1 for a while if I can see that something is happening with the TR7, and something certainly is. But it is pointless bringing in a new car with so much mystique and public interest only to have the embarrassment and chagrin of mechanical failures. So it is going to be right before the first public appearance so that we can come out of the blue and red corner with all guns blazing. Spectators are certainly going to be set alight by it – the car is tremendous to watch.

These thoughts bring the Chequered Flag Stratos to mind. Graham Warner, I'm convinced, couldn't have had a better situation even if he had engineered it. Had the Stratos been a 100 per cent winner from the word "go", within five of six rallies it would have lost all public support. The cry would have been: "What the hell do we want this £X000 supercar in our rallies for?" But because it has been such a problem-child all the way along, the win, when it came, was worth ten times as much in terms of kudos. The reaction was not one of "Well, it's a bloody Stratos, what do you expect?" The public and the press were behind Warner, and it was a brilliant achievement. You've got to hand it to them for staying with the problems; I'd like to know how many other teams would have carried on in such circumstances. This could only happen with one man who is so dedicated and, of course, who has the final say. I think it even got to the point at one stage where they were going to remove the number 13 from the chassis number! Perhaps they did that just before the Mintex. That win must be the best thing since they invented the Scandinavian gangbang. It has at least made the Formula Ford show a bit more valid. It's good for everyone.

Last drive for Opel, on the RAC in November . . . Tony feels the TR7 will shortly be a genuine winner.

Roger Clark in action with LAR 800P (the car he destroyed on the Mintex) during his magnificent RAC Rally drive – will he bounce back this weekend?

Tailpiece – the twilight hours of Dolomite Sprint.



An impressive debut for Norman Dickson's BDA-engined Modus – a win in the libre event.

CROFT

Harrington's Tate triumph

An encouraging number of competitors and spectators braved sundry snow flurries and turned up at Croft on Sunday for the BRSCC(N) season opener in the North-East. The racing was never dull and the sun shone even if it was distinctly nippy. Most impressive win of the day fell to Jim Evans in the turbocharged AET Engineering Escort RS2000 who had a margin of over a minute in hand over his nearest pursuer in the Troy Tire and Auto Centres Special Saloon round. Peter Harrington fought off strong opposition to win the Tate Trophy FF1600 final in Ed Praxel's not-so-new but absolutely immaculate Lotus-Scholar 68F, while others to win Northern championship rounds were Norman Dickson's British Caledonian Airways/Dickson's of Perth Modus M3 *(Formule Libre)*, **and the Biba Cosmetics & Croft Autodrome Europa of Chris Meek (Direct Tapes Production Sports).**

An excellent Formula Ford entry ensured two heats and a final for the Tate Trophy, with the first heat opening proceedings. One-time Moskvich driver Eric Horsfield (Alexis Mk 23) made a real flyer of a start and held an initial advantage over Mick Starkey's now side-radiatored Merlyn Mk 20A, while John Simpson's Nike Mk 10B was an early retirement when the core plug blew out. It took Starkey until lap three to take the lead, but then a long moment on the grass dropped him back to second place until the finish behind the well-driven Alexis. Nigel Robinson (Merlyn Mk 20A) remained third virtually throughout ahead of Alan Stringer's ex-Pete Clark Crosslé 25F and Tony Barley's Royale RP21.

The Direct Tapes Production Sports and the Modsports cars were lumped together to make a reasonable field which was started in two groups. Taken as a whole the race was led briefly by John Bury's 1.8 Elan, but Andy Smith's familiar ASM Elan soon came through from a second row start to take the initiative on lap two. The issue seemed settled with Smith holding a small but apparently decisive lead, but then on lap nine Smith pulled in to the pits with a flat tyre, leaving Bury with an easy win from Chris Meek in *that* Europa who came carving through the field in splendid style to win the Direct Tapes division of the race by a mere two laps! Meek had found a way past Ron Harper's rapid Triumph Spitfire some two laps before the latter overcooked it at the Chicane, hitting the outside bank fairly hard but with relatively little apparent damage. Third place overall thus fell to Ron Kirkman's Davrian. Former Cobra pilot Mike Smith put his red Elan on the front row of the grid but soon faded from contention in the race. There was plenty of close dicing among the Prodsports Spridgets with the highly photogenic Valli driving really well after being fastest in the class during practice. She held off the pack for the first three laps but finally had to give best to Howard Wadsworth's Sprite, although still beating Dave Karaskas's Shellsport Sprite.

Peter Harrington had a race-long battle with Ken Pickering's Jamun T3 in the second Tate heat, Pickering leading for six of the laps and Harrington the other four, including the last one to win by a precarious fifth of a second. John Kent came in to a fairly uneventful third place in his smart Royale RP21 ahead of John Simpson, who had been sportingly allowed another run after his earlier misfortune. Simpson had started at the back of the 19 car grid so his fourth place was highly meritorious.

Non-starters rather spoilt a potentially excellent big car line-up for the Troy Tire and Auto Centres qualifier. However, everyone could at least sit back and admire the whistling AET Escort Turbo, the quietest car in the race, as it devastated the opposition, winning by 61.8s from Keith Bowmaker's brutal Escort V8. Graeme Walker's Firenza was a solid third after a strong challenge from Jimmy Robertson's similarly-engined Robertsons of Cardenden 2.3 Avenger ended when the latter peeled off into the pits on lap seven. Andy Chapman's 5.7 Rapier-Chevrolet was next man up once Gerald Clark's class-leading Mini had departed from the fray, and led in class winners Ian Forrest (Drambuie Imp) and Owen Corrigan (Mini-Cooper S). Three Mini 7s squabbled away at the back of the field but only that of Chris Hill made it to the finish after a good scrap in the early stages.

Eric Horsfield again made a very quick start in the final of the Tate Trophy to hold the advantage after the first lap. However, next time around Peter Harrington was back in front and this time he drew away just far enough to keep out of reach despite out of balance brakes which were prone to lock up at the rear. Horsfield became embroiled in a fierce struggle for second place with Pickering and Simpson as Starkey ground to a halt on the first lap. The dispute ended on lap 11 when Horsfield and Simpson got involved in a spinnage at Spa, leaving Pickering with a comfortable second place ahead of Tony Barley, who only had 0.8s in hand over John Kent's similar Royale. Nigel Robinson and Alan Stringer completed the points winners.

The *Libre* finale had the smallest grid of the day – 11 cars – but produced a good Formula Atlantic battle between Norman Dickson's Modus M3 (numbered 707 for the benefit of his airline sponsor) and Alo Lawler's L&B Excavations Chevron B29. Dickson held on in the lead in his impressive new mount but Lawler reverted to earth-moving when he went off at the Chicane in heavy traffic on the last lap, leaving runner-up spot to Richard Sutherland's sports Chevron who was a mere 0.6s ahead of Tim Wood (John Thistlethwaite Racing Brabham-FVC BT35) who had overcome a misfire and rather alarming looking handling to make a late challenge. Last of the quick men was Jim Kelly in the reliable if rather dog-eared Trojan T101.

CHRIS MASON

Tate Trophy Formula Ford 1600. Heat One (10 laps): 1, Eric Horsfield (Alexis-Scholar Mk23), 12m 42.2s, 82.65 mph; 2, Mick Starkey (Merlyn-Scholar Mk20A), 12m 50.4s; 3, Nigel Robinson (Merlyn-Mk20A), 12m 52.4s; 4, Alan Stringer (Crossle-Rowland 25F), 12m 55.2s. **Fastest Lap:** Starkey and Horsfield, 1m 14.8s, 84.23 mph.

Direct Tapes Production Sports Car Championship Round and Modified Sports Cars (10 laps). Overall: 1, John Bury (1.8 Lotus Elan), 13m 04.4s, 80.32 mph; 2, Chris Meek (1.6 Lotus Europa), 13m 54.4s; 3, Ron Kirkman (1.1 Davrian), 9 laps; 4, Dave Abram (1.3 MG Midget), 9 laps. **Prod Sports £3,000-£4,500:** 1, Meek, 75.50 mph. No other starters. **Fastest Lap:** Meek, 1m 21.4s, 77.40 mph **(Record). £2,001-£3,000:** 1, Doc Griffiths (1.8 MGB), 65.08 mph; 2, Anthony Brewer (1.6 Morgan 4/4). No other starters. **Fastest Lap:** Griffiths, 1m 33.4s, 67.45 mph **(Record). Up to £2,000:** 1, Howard Wadsworth (1.3 Austin Healey Sprite), 64.52 mph; 2, Valli (1.5 MG Midget); 3, Dave Karaskas (1.3 Austin Healey Sprite). **Fastest Lap:** Valli, 1m 35.0s, 66.32 mph **(Record).**

Modsports 1,501-2,000cc: 1, Bury; 2 Mike Smith (1.6 Lotus Elan). No other finishers. **Fastest lap:** Andy Smith (1.6 Lotus Elan), 1m 13.2s, 86.07 mph. **Modsports up to 1,508cc:** 1, Kirkman, 71.68 mph; 2, Abram; 3, John Read (1.3 Austin Healey Sprite). **Fastest Lap:** Ron Harper (1.2 Triumph Spitfire), 1m 22.8s, 76.09 mph.

Tate Trophy Formula Ford 1600. Heat Two (10 Laps): 1, Peter Harrington (Lotus-Scholar 69F), 12m 50.0s, 81.82 mph; 2, Ken Pickering (Jamun-Rowland T3), 12m 50.2s; 3, John Kent (Royale-Scholar RP21), 12m 59.8s; 4, John Simpson (Nike-Scholar Mk10B), 13m 02.0s. **Fastest Lap:** Harrington, 1m 15.6s, 83.33 mph.

Troy Tire and Auto Centres Special Saloon Car Championship Round (10 Laps). Overall and over 1,300cc: 1, Jim Evans (2.0 Ford Escort RS2000 Turbo)l 12m 13 6s, 85.87 mph; 2, Keith Bowmaker (4.7 Ford Escort V8), 13m 15.4s; 3, Graeme Walker (2.3 Vauxhall Firenza), 13m 26.2s; 4, Andy Chapman (5.7 Sunbeam Rapier-Chevrolet V8), 9 laps. **Fastest Lap:** Evans, 1m 11.8s, 87.74 mph. **1,001-1,300cc:** 1, Owen Corrigan (1.3 Mini-Cooper S), 75.06 mph; 2, Ian Rogerson (1.3 Mini-Cooper S), 3, Dave Horsley (1.3 Mini-Cooper S). **Fastest Lap:** Rogerson, 1m 19.4s, 79.35 mph. **Up to 1,000cc:** 1, Ian Forrest (1.0 Chrysler Imp), 75.82 mph, 2, Kevin Taylor (1.0 Mini-Cooper S); 3, David Haigh (1.0 Mini-Cooper S) **Fastest Lap:** Forrest, 1m 22.0s, 76.83 mph. **Formula Mini 7:** 1, Chris Hill (850 Mini), 64.95 mph. No other finishers. **Fastest Lap:** Hill, 1m 32.6s, 68.03 mph.

Tate Trophy Formula Ford Trophy. Final (12 laps): 1, Harrington, 15m 04.4s, 83.59 mph, 2, Pickering, 15m 3.2s; 3, Tony Barley (Royale RP21), 15m 25.8s; 4, Kent; 5, Robinson, 6, Stringer. **Fastest Lap:** Harrington, 1m 14.2s, 84.91 mph.

BRSCC Northam Formule Libre Championship Round and Clubmans Sports Cars (15 Laps). Overall and Formule Libre: 1, Norman Dickson (1.6 Modus-BDA M3), 16m 39.4s, 94.55 mph, 2, Richard Sutherland (1.9 Chevron-FVC B23), 17m 47.4s; 3, Tim Wood (1.8 Brabham-FVC BT35), 17m 48.0s; 4, Jim Kelly (5.0 Trojan-Chevrolet T101), 13 laps. **Fastest Lap:** Alo Lawler (1.6 Chevron-Swindon/BDA B29), 1m 04.8s, 97.22 mph. **Clubmans, 1,600cc FF engines:** 1, George Valente (1.6 Mallock U2-Scholar). No other starters. **Fastest Lap:** Valente, 1m 23.2s, 75.72 mph.

Whistling Jim's turbo won at Croft again. Jim Evans' Escort has had a winter rebuild and with sponsorship from AET Engineering turbo charging specialists, is as fine as ever.

The winds of change...

Story and photographs by MARTIN HOLMES

Its the time for change! In Sweden Eklund is challenging the prowess of Blomqvist, in Spain Zanini is now at least the equal of Canellas, in England some people mutter about the end of the reign for Roger Clark — and now in Finland the number two team man Tapio Rainio has won his second major victory in a row. At the end of January he won the Marlboro Arctic Rally, at the beginning of March he wins the Snowrally. In January Lampinen was unlucky to lose his command of the rally—his differential broke — but this time he was beaten in a straight fight by his team mate. The Snowrally was a badly-named event: there was very little snow on the actual roads — ice there was a plenty, there was a certain amount of clear gravel but the snow lay more on the surrounding fields and hills than on the roads themselves.

The Finnish winter rally tyre rules played an important part in the results: ten tyres only were allocated to the competitors, and on these tyres studding was strictly controlled. Even on the mildly powerful cars the drivers had to use caution so that they retained what studding they were permitted, for as long as possible. Many drivers went hard in the early sections but most of these finished with tyres almost devoid of metal.

The Hankiralli ranks as the third most important event in Finland, behind the 1000 Lakes based at Jyvaskyla, a World event and the Marlboro Arctic based in the north at Rovaniemi, which carries European championship coefficient 4. This event carries coefficient two, a rating reckoned by many to be too small when the excellent organisation standards are compared with the other events. It is based at Helsinki although the rally itself is held on roads near to Turku in the west. The roads are secret, being announced only on the morning of the event, when photocopy maps and roadbooks are issued. Forty-nine different stages were chosen, two being cancelled and all but ten or so being held during the hours of darkness. Because the stages used closed public roads — on unsurfaced tracks — the organisers had to order entrants not to use minor roads in the region of the rally, and clearly this favoured local drivers to a certain degree. Ulf Gronholm in an Ascona went exceptionally well for a conventional layout car, until one heard that he lived in that area of Finland. The twisting stages certainly complemented cars with engines over the driven wheels, and the ice brought lesser powerful engines into contention. Two Chrysler Imps went very well, one lying as high as third at one point whilst the Skodas of Saaristo and Haugland battled their way into the top six places during the event.

ENTRY

Saab Finland were the only full factory team to compete. They had three cars, all 96 models, two (for Rainio and Lampinen) with fuel injection and one with carburretors for Jari Vilkas. This team had led the Arctic rally 1-2-3 at one point and clearly hold the command of winter rallying in Finland. Once again Swedish Saab did not trouble to enter although three times in previous years they had won. Other teams had varying factory support: perhaps the Ford team being the most important. They had easily the most powerful cars on the event, some 50 bhp more than even the fuel injection Saabs, but on ice-bound roads this is not always a good thing. The most interesting car was that of Ari Vatanen, being Makinen's asphalt specification Escort RS1800 converted back to loose surface condition, even so far as the removal of the special wheel arches which were considered to be traps for snow. Pentti Airikkala's car was the RS1600 2-litre used by David Sutton for Erik Aaby on the Mintex whilst John Taylor's Haynes of Maidstone RS1800 made up the team. This was John's first rally out of the British isles and first ice and snow event — just like Galway he set about learning another facet of the sport. There was a major panic when a headgasket failed the night before the start — this was a Brian Hart unit which did not use the normal liners in the engine. Four times in the past few months he had retired from a rally with a blown head gasket. Pentti on the other hand had little, except the conditions, to worry about. On every alternate rally he entered for David Sutton he has enjoyed outright victory — and last time (on the Mintex) he had retired. Would his luck still hold good?

Other interesting cars included Leo Kinnunen with the Volvo 66 (Daf-type) and Pauli Toivonen's Simca Rallye 2, both exactly as seen on the Arctic whilst many previous Hankiralli entrants regarded the Imp of Makela as a car capable of surprisingly good results. Kyosti Hamalainen's Avenger in Group 1 was always a surprisingly quick car but this time the ice was expected to hamper the car. Once again there were many Avengers: a total of 13 in Group 1 and a couple in Group 2. All had 1600cc engines. Seventy-seven cars started in all, which included entries from two other British drivers, Jill Robinson in an RS2000 co-driven by a Finnish girl Satu Valtaharju, wife of the Skoda driver and David Hardcastle with a Finnish male co-driver in his Magpie/Peter Russek Capri. John Haugland from Norway was the only other non-Finnish driver.

RALLY

It had the makings of a really bleak northern winter's night as the cars lined up at the start of the rally. The harbour alongside the start area

To finish the rally at all was an achievement for a non-Scandinavian. Despite a roll on the third stage, John Taylor made it to 13th overall.

This picture of a Saab, braking hard for a square left gives some idea of the atmosphere . . .

even now was frozen over so that icebreakers were needed whenever a ship set sail, and smoke from large torches mounted in the starting enclosure threw a ghostly light around the town. Lampinen, first away, was followed after a gap of some five minutes (leaving gaps for Mikkola and Fowkes, neither of whom started the rally) by the red Norwegian Skoda of Haugland, the white Ascona of Gronholm and then Rainio. John Taylor was at number eight ahead of Enomaa in his Blue Rose Team BMW and the brown Volvo of Kinnunen. But this time, any daylight there was had almost gone, and when the cars lined up at the control at the start of the first special stage it was completely dark. Sudden brows, long stretches of sheet ice, little piles of packed snow at the edge of the road to catch the errant car. This was perhaps less endearing to the Finnish enthusiasts who longed for firm, deep snow but it was daunting stuff nonetheless. The second stage was held over what appeared to be a lake, with random bands ploughed out of the surface of the water and connecting stretches of roadway through the trees. The times at this point bore little significance. Some drivers, like Vatanen, used tyres with studs protruding some way out of the rubber for some good, fast times whilst others used tyres that would keep their grip for longer periods, even though less effectively. John Taylor rolled his Escort on the third special stage, doing less body damage than one might expect from an uneventful forest rally but losing time all the same. Antero Laine was stopped by police at a radar check in Lohja — which later claimed Jill Robinson, who earlier had been delayed at a service point by an overheating engine. Laine was able to continue but Jill was well over the permitted 10 kph leeway, and was excluded.

Gradually Vatanen's tyres wore down and Airikkala caught up on stage times, so that by the seventh stage the Snowman Rally winner was ahead of the other Fords, just. Near the end of the stage the car went on to three cylingers and just after the finish it boiled. The head gasket had blown. Jussi Kynsilehto (Polski Fiat 125p) blocked the stage for a while trying to chnage a wheel when the studs had broken, and Enomaa went off. His plight was worsened by the unexpected arrival of Jari Vilkas, whose vision had been blocked by snowdust from Taylor's Escort. Suddenly Taylor turned left and Vilkas went flying off the road — straight into the BMW. Ari meanwhile was continuing, and after changing tyres achieved a fastest time before going off — for good. David Hardcastle meanwhile was struggling well with his Capri, although he was alarmed on one stage to find himself being caught by a little Fiat. When he later discovered that the little Fiat was a 126, his alarm turned to Horror! Kinunen retired with transmission trouble and Hannu Valtharju was troubled by brakes which were jamming on. The lead became a mammoth tussle between the Opel of Gronholm and amazingly the Datsun of Salonen, the latter being the car crashed by Alen on the 1000 Lakes, and now going just as well. The Saabs, meanwhile, were hanging just behind in third and fourth positions, although Vilkas had retired having gone off again.

After the long rest halt at Paimio came the time of reckoning. Those who had been lavish in their driving style to the cost of their studs were going to face an ugly night on metal-less rubber. Rainio now began to press for the lead, and although he and Gronholm both overtook Salonen in the Datsun the task of beating Gronholm who was on his home ground was not proving easy. Lampinen meanwhile was suffering from tyre trouble, having not conserved his tyres in the early stages as well as Rainio, and he could not catch the Opel. In fact at one point the Imp of Timo Makela overtook Simo in classification but the head gasket on the Imp began to fail and although he would finish the event he lost time.

The battle for Skoda supremacy was at its height. After 28 stages Saaristo was three seconds ahead of Haugland, and very gradually he was able to improve. The sight of those Czechoslovakian cars on full lock hurtling round a downhill corner, their drivers praying that the bends would not tighten, was worth braving the cold just to watch. Haugland however did not finish, his camshaft breaking ("you know, it's always something different. We never know what will stop our rallies," Markku told me afterwards), though this time the Finn was able to make the end. There was a battle for ladies' supremacy between the statuesque redhead Marketta Oksala, now driving Lada 1300 with sponsorship from Lucky Strike and Kirsti Airikkala the cuddly wife of Pentti with a Group 1 Avenger. Marketta gradually drew ahead of Kirsti — and both of them were able to draw away from a despairing Hardcastle in his Capri. But to finish this rally for a non-Scandinavian was an achievement, let alone for two British drivers, one at the wheel of such an awkward car as the Capri and the other driving the most powerful car on the event. Rainio kept his lead with Gronholm second and Lampinen third, not quite the complete mastery that most people expected but as the cars were lined up in parc ferme outside the Scan Auto Saab service factory near Helsinki at the end of the event, it was good enough.

Below: Horror or happiness for Makela's co-driver as the Peugeot powers across the bridge?

Hankiralli ECR coeff 2

1, T. Rainio/E. Nyman (Saab 96) 22809 secs; 2, V. Gronholm/R. Anttonen (Opel Ascona) 22968; 3, S. Lampinen/J. Markkanen (Saab 96) 23136; 4, T. Makela/J. Korhonen (Chrysler Imp) 23314; 5, M. Saaristo/T. Alanen (Skoda S120) 23484; 6, T. Salonen/J. Markkula (Datsun Violet) 23722; 7, H. Vilkman/M. Kataja (Saab 96) 23868; 8, K. Hamalainen/U. Vihervaara (Chrysler Avenger) 23938; 9, P. Karha/S. Siitonen (Chrysler Avenger) 24131; 10, K. Makela/J. Miettinen (Peugeot 304S) 24278.
77 starters — 43 finishers.

Finnish Saab team line-up. The sea in the background is of course completely frozen over.

Высококачественная белая офисная бумага КСЕРОКС «Бизнес»

Piggy pinches the butcher's bacon

The Devonshire Suite of the Idlewells Precinct, Sutton-in-Ashfield was full to bursting point at lunchtime last Sunday. The Dukeries Motor Club and BTRDA Championship fraternity were supporting the bar and catering facilities to their utmost, the tables on the stage were overloaded with sparkling silverware, the winner and runner-up were engaged in lighthearted and noisy banter in the centre of the room while the lower runners compared times and experiences. The scribes of the motoring press rushed around from group to group trying hard to pick up all the known facts plus a few more their rivals might just have missed. In another corner the organisers and sponsors gathered happily prior to the presentation of the spoils of combat. An idyllic way to end the 16th Dukeries Rally it would seem. But as it is becoming the way, so much, in our chosen sport, it was not to be.

The atmosphere changed. At first almost imperceptably, with a few of the ones 'in the know' gathering in small and serious groups, each with steadily increasing gloom clouds appearing over their heads. Then the terrible fact hit the eating, drinking and chattering masses. The news we all dread to hear 'Watch out, there's a protest about.' Immediately the jovial conviviality turned to one of anticipated sourness, those hardened survivors of the siege of Scarborough winced into their pint pots and tightened their belts for the long and frustrating wait ahead. Already tired competitors were beginning to feel the effects of their unaccustomed night without sleep and the thought of a long wait before they set out on their journey home proved too much for many and like lemmings the rush for the door began.

After the recent spate of timing hassles, the bone of contention which afflicted the Dukeries organisers was the often discussed, but seldom acted upon, ever increasing activity of servicing! The organisers having had bad experiences in the past with unorganised servicing losing them valuable stage mileage, due to inconsiderate behaviour and displays of bad manners from certain service crews, wisely decided to designate the areas in which competitors *had* to service. These areas were easily accessible and joined directly by red roads, and competitors were given an extremely generous road schedule in order to facilitate their use of these areas with the minimum of haste. Unfortunately the organisers did not lay down a specified service route, and that together with the wording of their service regulation was to be the ultimate cause of an unpleasant situation. A number of service crews were seen during the night actually on rally route obviously waiting to see their charges safely through a given point, some of them even waiting in "QUIET" zones with their flashing lights revolving at full blast, others actually waited at stage finishes.

The Dukeries National Rally 1976 was sponsored by the *Mansfield & Sutton Observer* and Esso with assistance from Ashfield District Council, and was the second round of the Esso Uniflo BTRDA Gold Star Rally Championship. This year's event had a change in format, as well as date, moving from autumn to early spring in deference to the less crowded calendar earlier in the year.

The stages were run mainly at night with the finish in Ashfield at 10.15 am, this format certainly proved not only to be cheaper for the competitors, as well as giving them some useful night driving experience, but also enabled the organisers to include a number of stages that would have been denied to them if they had run them in daylight. The result was a well run event that was absolutely perfect for the clubman and certainly warranted inclusion in the championship.

The battle of victory was a very hard fought and personal matter between two of Yorkshire's favourite rallying personalities, David "Piggy" Thompson, and Tony Drummond. Piggy was teamed for this event with Mike Nicholson in the Page Food's Porsche Carrera, while Drummond again had the services of his giant and genial sponsor, Derek Carman, the catering/rallying butcher from Wakefield. For Drummond a win on this event would give him the hat-trick, while Piggy was keen to give the Stuttgart marque it's first British national win.

Drummond was running at number one, his usual Escort having been re-equipped with his 240bhp motor after running a detuned "RAC" version on the Mintex. The only other mod to the car was to lower the co-driver's seat in an attempt to reduce the centre of gravity. George Beever/Stuart France figured at two with their Escort which had been borrowed back from David Sutton as their new Escort 2 will not be ready until the Elcar rally, they were to be plagued with carburettor 'O' ring problems which eventually caused their retirement at breakfast. At number three were the eventual winners Thompson/Nicholson, while the Derby Road Garage Escort 2 of Graham Lepley/Malcolm Harvey sported new sponsorship from Barrett Homes Ltd. This very large building company were treating the event as a 'one-off' experiment, with the hopes of continuation if the outing was a success. Randolph Whittal-Williams/Roger Hemmings were debuting their ex-Rockey ex-works Escort which replaced the car written off so dramatically on the Tour of Eppynt. At six Robin Farrington had lost the services of regular co-driver Geoff Hignett late in the week and replaced him with Norquil Fraser who was unfortunately somewhat less experienced. The reigning BTRDA champion followed on at seven with his venerable ex-works RS. The top ten was completed by Dick Rollett/Neil Turvey in their usual Escort, the Leedhams of York Vauxhall Magnum for Pip Dale/Richard Stark, and Reg Mullenger/Peter Roberts also Escort mounted.

From the start the event bypassed Thieves Wood which was impassable due to fallen trees, caused by the recent gales. In fact the club could have lost many more forest miles if it had not been for the co-operation of the local Forestry Commission officials in giving priority to clearance of the roads to be used by the rally. Apart from that, the roads were in superb condition having recently been regraded. At the end of the first group of forest stages the event had already lost the Escorts of David Grainger (SS 2) exploded clutch, Keith Brennan – burst oil pipe, David Stokes – under bonnet electrical fire, and Charles Eveson – ZF gearbox stuck in reverse. As the cars started the tarmac stages, Piggy was in trouble with tyres; his service crew had discovered a nail in one of his wide rear racing tyres and having no spare, he was forced to run all the tarmac stages with the narrow fronts fitted all round.

As the rally reached breakfast at Blyth, various competitors had tales to tell, "Drumbo" was struggling with carburettor problems and had to have his 'O' rings replaced after the engine had eaten the originals. George Beever had the same problems but was unable to cure them. Pip Dale had the co-drivers door fly open on Gamston, with the result that the road book and time card flew off into the night and they lost time reversing back and finding them, Peter Edwards rolled his Lakeland Motors Escort, also on Gamston, and did nothing to improve the looks of his already tatty car, while Reg Mullenger was suffering from fuel problems which were eventually cured by putting two pumps in series. At halfway, positions were as follows: Thompson 644; Drummond 691; Lepley 694; Mullenger 705; Whittal-Williams 729; Farrington 731; Simpson 749; Rawson 767; Beeby 742.

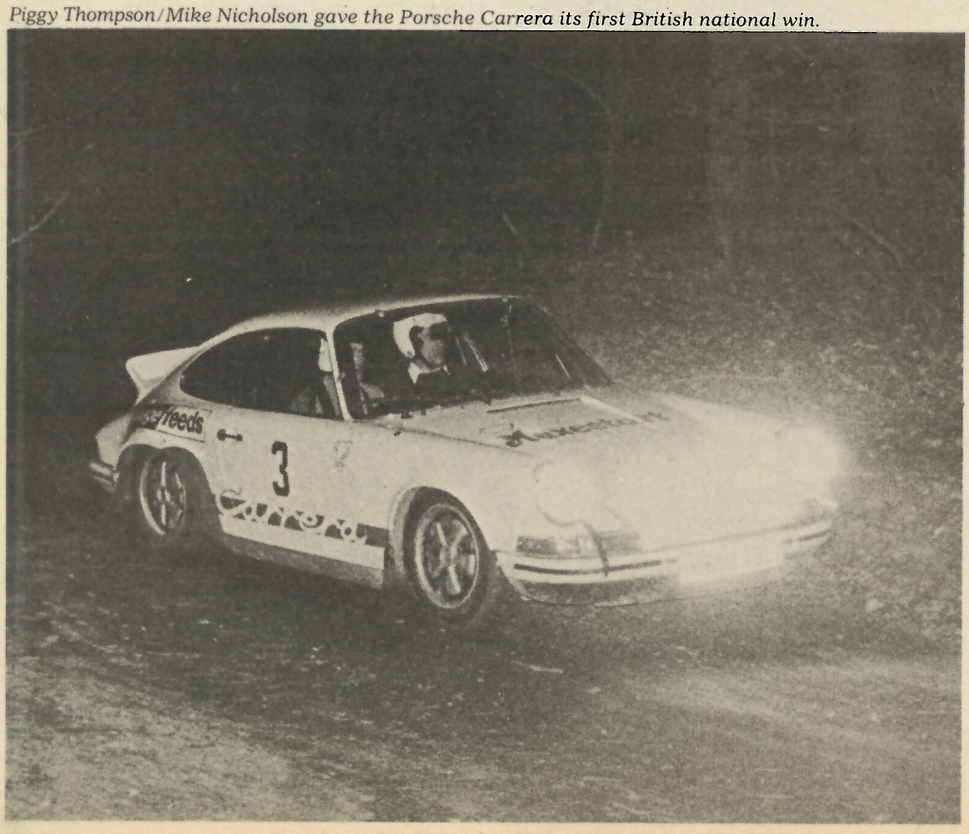
The crews restarted in daylight, and proceeded straight to a new stage on army land, the corners of which featured raised curbs one of which caught out Lepley, the ensuing collision launching the car into the air and over a dyke, ripping off the front spoiler in the process. (The imperterbable Lepley claiming never to have liked the offending piece of glassfibre anyway). Meanwhile the Simpson brothers broke a 'U' bolt on the axle, and were fortunate to buy a new one for £1 from a friendly passing service crew.

The rally proceeded back through the forests with little drama, apart from Piggy's gearbox which was jumping out of second, this was cured by Nicholson holding the appropriate lever in position . . . while Robin Farrington dropped out of contention when his ignition black box failed, which took five minutes to replace.

The last stage of the day was a spectator epic on the road round Kings Mill Reservoir, and as could be expected some one had to do a 'Mintex' and take to the water. In this case it was Ray Birkin/Bob Benny in a brand new Escort RS 2000 Mk 2; anyhow they were retrieved without personal damage, thus giving the *Observer* some good pictures and a story for this week's issue. Indeed as sponsors, they were fantastic, publishing 90,000 copies of their rally supplement, of which some 70,000 were distributed to local householders before the event and the remainder sold during the event. What a pity that this support for the event should be rewarded by such an anti-climax at the finish of what was otherwise a splendid event.

JOHN FODEN

Piggy Thompson/Mike Nicholson gave the Porsche Carrera its first British national win.



1 P. Thompson/M. Nicholson (Porsche Carrera) 1126; 2 T. Drummond/D. Carman (RS 1600) 1154; 3 G. Lepley/M. Harvey (RS 1800) 1208; 4 R. Mullenger/P. Roberts (RS 1600) 1220; 5 R. Whittal-Williams/R. Hemmings (RS 1600) 1247; 6 G. Simpson/A. Simpson (RS 1600) 1287; 7 D. Beeby/P. Maskell (RS 1600) 1305; 8 M. Rawson/C. Wilson (Opel Kadett) 1324; 9 D. Rollet/. Turvey (RS 1600) 1353; 10 S. Reed/D. Howell (RS 1600) 1364.

Ian Briggs heads the howling pack of Mini 1000s through Maggots on their first lap.

SILVERSTONE

Maximum Mini thrills

The 1976 motor racing season got under way at Silverstone on Saturday with a meeting of seven events organised by the Midland Automobile Club, which consisted of two Mini races, FF 1600's, Modsports, *Formule Libre* and Special Saloons. The crowd certainly had their money's worth at this opening meeting — if the rest are as good it will be a great season for club racing.

After a 20 minute high speed trial the Bob Fox Mini7 race opened proceedings on the bright, but bitterly cold day. From the middle of the front row Chris Tyrrell in the Calbrook Mini shot into the lead, something he was never to lose. Graham Wosket made a great start from the third row and was third at the end of lap one, door handle to door handle with Graham Wenham. While Tyrrell pulled away at the front the next four positions chopped and changed until lap 7 when Woskett had a moment at Becketts and was touched by the close following Terry Pudwell. Wenham by now had built up a cushion of safety in second place while coming through Woodcote on the last lap John West got onto the grass and lost third place to Woskett.

From the drop of the flag in the Streetly Steels FF race Richard Wills shot into the lead and disappeared. At the end of lap one Pete Oxley and Geoff Pruden spun at Woodcote, both without damage and were able to carry on in the two last places. Chris Skellern from fourth spot on the grid began to dice with Brian Turner and Tom Wood for second place which lasted up until the last corner when in a furious scramble it was decided in favour of Turner from Wood and Skellern.

In the Special Saloon race Tony Dickinson had things all his own way with pole position, a flag to flag win and fastest lap. Roger Dowe in his Mazda was left behind at the start and only got away in the middle of the pack. Doug Emms fared even worse in his Camaro being left in the pits with a dud battery and getting away half a lap after the others. In what turned out to be a processional race Geoff Robinson in his Escort and Basil Dagge in his immaculate home built Imp finished second and third respectively.

The Modsports drama began even before the race when Eric Adams in his Sprite had a mysterious accident before even getting onto the track. The car lurched violently to left as he was about to go down the pit lane, smashed into the protective tyres and ended up sideways in the middle of the track. Evans was badly concussed and was taken away by ambulance. Alan Dyson was troubled too, being left at the start with the rear wheels of his Midget locked solid and the first lap was over before the car could be heaved off the track. The race developed into a very close dice between Robin Gray in the Lawrencetuned Morgan and Mark Hales in his own Turner. The lead changed just about every lap, but at the end of the last it was Gray in front by a length. Third was Steve Roberts in his pretty Mini Marcos.

The second Mini race of the day was the Peter Collins Memorial race for Mini 1000s. From pole position Ian Briggs led at the end of lap one, but he had seven other cars tied to the back of his bumper. Meanwhile Nick Lemon went straight on into the catch fences at Woodcote. Second time round and the lead was held by Andy Devine while Briggs twitched a little through Woodcote and lost two places. At the end of the third lap Mike Curnow took the lead, at the same time Ian Briggs was pushed out of the race in a most decisive fashion. The car ending up smashed among the catch fences at Woodcote. On lap 6 Andy Devine and Derek May were both black flagged for loose body work after the fracas with Briggs, while May complied and called into the pits Devine continued to the end of the race. While all this was going on Mike Curnow was increasing his lead from Eric Groves and Tom Hurn which is the way it stayed until the end.

The meeting was rounded off with a 15 lap *Formule Libre* race sponsored by Fairley Steels. Chris Choat's Trojan 101 lapped everyone up to third place. Brian Green in his Gryphon kept in fairly close contact throughout, while Alan Chennell in his GRD was the only other unlapped runner.

PETER MOORE

Chris Choat heads the drag away at the start of the libre race. Alan Channell (GRD) nearest the camera, is alongside Brian Green's Gryphon on the front row. Below, Chris Tyrrell leads the Mini Seven field on the first lap at Becketts.

Bob Fox Mini 7, Leyland National Mini Challenge round (10 laps): 1, Chris Tyrrell (Calbrook Mini), 12m 49.0s; 75.28 mph; 2, Graham Wenham (Micktuned Mini), 12m 56.4s; 3 , Graham Weskett (Ripspeed Mini), 12m 56.8s; 4, John West (BLMC Mini), 12m 59.8s; 5, Martin Godall (Marvellous Mini), 13m 1.8s; 6, Bob Addison (Austin Mini), 13m 3.6s. **Fastest lap:** 1m 15.8s, 76.37 mph.

Streetly Steels Formula Ford 1600 race (10 laps): 1, Richard Wills (MRE 76F), 11m 8.4s, 86.61 mph; 2, Brian Turner (Lotus 51C), 11m 11.9s; 3, Tom Wood (Hawke DL11), 11m 11.2s; 4, Chris Skellern (Crossle 30F), 11m 11.4s; 5, Paul Wooten (Dulon MP17), 11m 21.8s; 6, Bob Groves (Royale RP3), 11m 22.4s. **Fastest lap:** Skellern, 1m 5.2s, 88.74 mph.

Special Saloons (10 laps) overall: 1, Tony Dickinson (2.0 Ford Escort), 11m 17.0s, 85.51 mph; 2, Geoffrey Robinson (1.6 Ford Escort), 11m 57s; 3, Basil Dagge (1.0 Hillman Imp), 12m 2.4s; 4, Dave Carvell (1.3 Mini Cooper), 12m 9s. **Up to 850 cc:** 1, Mike Kirby (850 Chrysler Imp), 12m 28s; 2, Robert Goodwin (850 Hillman Imp). **Fastest lap:** Kirby, 1m 12.4s, 79.96 mph. **851-1000 cc:** 1, Dagge; 2, Martin Darnell (1.0 Hillman Imp) **Fastest lap:** Dagge, 1m 8.4s, 84.53 mph; **1001-1300cc:** 1, Carvell, 79.41 mph; 2, Malcolm Allen (1.3 Mini Cooper S). **Fastest lap:** Allen, 82.46 mph. **Over 1300 cc:** 1, Dickinson, 85.51 mph; 2, Robinson.

Modsports (10 laps): 1, Robin Gray (3.5 Morgan +8), 11m 55.6s, 80.89 mph; 2, Mark Hales (1.6 Turner Mk111), 11m 56.4s; 3, Steven Roberts (1.1 Mini Marcos), 12m 32.8s; 4, Paul Scott (1.6 Lotus Elan) 13m 1.2s. **Up to 1150 cc:** 1 Roberts, 79.30 mph, no other finishers. **Fastest lap:** Roberts, 1m 13.9s, **1151-1500 cc:** 1, Judy Andreason (1.5 Marcos). **Fastest lap:** Andreason, 1m 25.2s, 67.95 mph. **1501-2000 cc:** 1, Hales, 80.81 mph; 2, Scott. **Fastest lap:** Hales, 1m 10.2s, 80.46 mph.

Peter Collins Memorial Mini 1000 race, Leyland National Mini Challenge qualifying round (10 laps): 1, Mike Curnow (Longman Mini), 12m 16.4s, 78.61 mph; 2, Eric Groves (Daytune Mini) 12m 16.6s; 3, Tom Hurn (Daytune Mini), 12m 28.4s; 4, Alan Prestbury (BLMC Mini), 12m 30.4s; 5, Phil Spurling (Oselli Mini), 12m 32.8s; 6, John Bradburn (BLMC Mini), 12m 35s. **Fastest lap:** Groves, 1m 11.6s, 80.85 mph.

Formule Libre (15 laps): 1, Chris Choat (5.0 Trojan T101), 14m 57.8s, 96.71 mph; 2, Brian Green (1.6 Gryphon C4A), 14m 58.8s; 3, Alan Chennell (1.6 GRD B73), 15m 30.2s; 4, Bob Groves (1.6 Royal RP3), 15m 54.4s; 5, Dave Morgan (1.6 Lotus 61), 15m 55.8s; 6, Paul Rendle (1.6 Lola T340), 15m 57.4s. **Fastest lap:** Choat and Green, 58.6s, 98.78 mph.

BRSCC's weighty problem

The BRSCC started off the season by showing a strong hand at Brands Hatch. There was much weighing, sealing and a certain amount of dubious weight, so that the season has immediately two tribunals on its hands.

The first three Mexico/Escort Sports were weighed as were the first three Formula Fords, and there were no problems there. The Formula Ford engines of Mike Blanchet, David Kennedy and Trevor Van Rooyen were also sealed.

But problems did arise on the weighbridge for the Radio One saloons. Three cars of the eight first and second placed men in the classes were underweight. The culprits were Peter Slade's Mazda RX2 which should have weighed 2033 with the automatic five per cent allowance but in fact weighed 1968lbs. However, Slade let it go and is not appealing.

The other two concerned both believe they have grounds for appeal. Phil Dowsett's Capri weighed 2391 instead of 2451 lbs but he apparently believes that it is not defined which type of Capri is concerned, hence his appeal. Ford are supporting his claims.

The final car was the flying Toyota Celica of Bill Sydenham driven by Win Percy. It should have weighed 2522lbs according to the *Autocar* Buyer's Guide whence the weights are taken, but in fact weighed 2176. Bob Gathercole of Samuri said that he checked the weight against a catalogue from Toyota and found that they could in fact go down to 2110 lbs, so that the disqualification was a complete surprise. It has since transpired that *Autocar* have the figure published wrongly, as it was wrongly supplied by Toyota GB, and should read 2215 lbs instead of 2625. The latter's weight refers to a Crown Estate or similar. Sydenham is appealing against the decision.

Browning's comment on the day was that it "was a sad day. It all revolves around the Peter Jopp tribunal from last year, so we shall see what happens". He further castigated competitors for not checking their weight on a weighbridge, nor checking that the *Autocar* weight was published correctly.

Fack closes the gap

Kincrafts occupied the first three places minus the RAC Champion when Yorkshire SCC attracted 34 competitors to the 1976 running of their 4/44 Trial near Brighouse last Sunday. Dodging through the snow showers, which did not materially affect conditions, a smiling Tony Harrison emerged the winner by four marks after three rounds of eight hills.

Harrison, an infrequent contender this season so far, lay third after the first round but bombed into the lead by dropping only three marks on his second tour which left everyone else miles behind. He then rubbed it in by doing even better on his third round by dropping one mark, though Julian Fack, who finished fourth, managed to clean the lot on his third round.

Harrison, on 22 marks, beat Reg Allen by four marks. He led the field on 13 marks after eight hills, collected 11 points on his second round of which nine were most unfortunate and came back strongly at the end.

His brother Dennis Allen, making a welcome re-appearance, finished third on 30 marks and he could so easily have won the trial outright but for tiny errors which were spotted by eagle eyed marshals.

His score was equalled by Julian Fack's Impunity, who had suffered from a bad start and who improved immensely as the day wore on, culminating with the only clean sheet. George Fisher brought his neat Uris machine along and collected a merited fifth spot on 35 marks ahead of Lol Hurt's Ford Special.

Tony Harrison – smiling victor

Jack Pearce was almost nowhere, down in eighth spot, and Julian Fack continues to close the gap at the head of the championship table.

1, A. Harrison (Kincraft), 22 marks; 2, R. Allen (Kincraft), 26 marks) 3, D. Allen (Kincraft), 30 marks; 4, Julian Fack (Impunity), 30 marks; 5, G. Fisher (Iris), 35 marks; 6, L. Hurt (Ford Special), 42 marks. **RAC Championship:** 1, Pearce, 122 pts; 2, Fack, 117 pts.

Friswell in FF 2000

Friz the Whizz is back. After a worrying winter, 1975 Supersports ace Geoff Friswell is back on the tracks again for 1976, and in a Formula in which he's not competed before, FF2000.

It all started when Roy Bates, a co-director of R E Bates and Son, builders and shopfitters based in Leicester, saw Friswell's profile in AUTOSPORT earlier this year, and has since offered monetary support. Friswell and a supporter named Roy Smith have since been chasing up chassis manufacturers and have come up with a semi-works Hawke on the same basis as that run by Mac McKinstry for Tiff Needell, with a Scholar engine from the works. The car will be painted in the yellow and black colours of R E Bates and Sons and Friswell and his band of helpers will be doing the basic preparation. The car's debut is expected to be this Sunday at the well supported Allied Polymer round at the Race of Champions, under the banner Geoff Friswell Racing with R E Bates and Sons.

Read threatens

Ron Picardo made the only Top Fuel run of the weekend at Santa Pod, turning a nice 7.78s at 205mph in Firefly on a demonstration run at the end of the meeting on Sunday. The early date had found a lot of cars still wanting parts, and to be frank the weather was not suitable for running more than the number of cars that did turn up.

The Pro Comp class saw the closest potential threat yet to the Stone Racing team domination of the class when Jim Read took his ex-Priddle dragster to an 8.5s win over Peter Barnett in the ex-Skilton Vauxhall funny car, which was settling in a new detuned motor for the class. This one run was as close as anyone has been to the 7 second times set by Andrews driving the same car last year, and although Read was beaten quite handily in the final by the more experienced driver, he must have been well pleased with his performance. Stone had beaten Pat Cuss's neat injected 392 Fiat bodied rail when Cuss red-lit, then turned an easy 8.2s to beat Read in the final as he was caught napping at the line with 9.5s.

The other feature elimination was Pro Stock, set for four cars, but reduced to three by 'flu in the case of Gary Goggin. This left Tony Dickson as favourite, still running last year's engine put in just for the one race, with Howerd Smith and Dave Rose challenging in their Nova and Cuda respectively. Rose's car sounded stronger than ever in qualifying until a dreadful moment when it went drastically off-song with what proved to be a broken rotor arm, while Smith crossed lanes and shut off in the rather erratic Nova.

Dickson had trouble with minor carburettor fires in the cold, but clocked a good 10.6 to earn the bye run – fortunately as on this his battery went dead at the start and he had time to fit a new one to run a flat-sounding 13.9s. Rose had meanwhile beaten Smith with a much improved 11.5s to 14.5s as the Nova again wandered around the track, but poor Rose then had a rod-bolt snap as he was staging for the final against Dickson — whose car was still not sounding right as he turned a slow 11.59s.

Mike Blanchet – Crossle to Lola via Lotus.

Blanchet's Lola

Mike Blanchet, who last year raced a semi-works Crossle, started off his season at Brands Hatch back in his elderly Lotus, and still won. After a season with the Crossle, Blanchet has to consider a new car, and has plumped for a new Lola T440. While the car is being built, Blanchet took his old Lotus out of retirement, and slayed the opposition to kick off the season with maximum points in the Townsend Thoresen series.

● The chosen Dish of the Day at Silverstone was Alan Dyson, driver of a modsports Midget and a long-time member of the BMRMC. Unfortunately the gearbox seized on the Midget, so Dyson just enjoyed being the Dish.

Shopping for Sport

Debenhams are the new sponsors of the BRSSC's Ford Escort challenge. Peter Browning apparently went shopping last Wednesday to Oxford Street, London and tied up the deal after the Brands Hatch programme went to press, and the store now lends its name to the series.

The prize money and points system are exactly as last year, while the dates remain the same as published.

Meanwhile there was a new name new car and new winner in the series' first race at Brands on Sunday. The new name was that of Mick Hill, the Renault 5 driver who follows in Neil McGrath's footsteps to contest both championships. The new car was the Escort Sport for Graham Hollis, last year's 'find', whose new car is sponsored by Associated Tyre Specialists. Hollis showed well in Mexico events and did well on the Tour of Britain.

Finally, the new winner was 19-year-old Wayne Wainwright, having only his third race. Wainwright has considerable experience in a big Capri in sprints which he shared with his brother. He has bought the ex-Steve Thompson Mexico, and he used this to good effect on Sunday to win.

● Early leader — after one round — of the Vandervell Award for Novice Drivers is Dave Carvell, a special saloon car driver who has eight points, from young Tom Wood (Formula Ford) with six and Roger Dowe (special saloon) on four.

Stephens wins, many fail

A day of shocks and surprises last Sunday near Burton when several of the front runners in the RAC Production Car Trials Championship failed to live up to their reputations. One man who did maintain his consistent form, however, was Mike Stephens who duly collected the VT Fellows Memorial Trophy with a fine display in his Mexico taking victory on index from Robert Carr by some three per cent.

Stephens managed to get round the Brian Betteridge designed course with the loss of only 21 marks, his victory being clinched handsomely in the afternoon when he dropped only nine marks to leave Dennis Wells trailing in his wake.

The Carr family also had a most successful excursion into the Midlands for David, who may well have been in the lead at lunch, dropped only one mark on the afternoon's tour for an 11 mark total.

Big surprise in Class 1 was the demise of Geoff Spencer who could not remember the last time he had been out of the first three in an RAC round. Spencer never got to terms with the course and was down to fifth. George Harrison, from Glossop, however, really excelled in his Clubman GT and saw off such renowned campaigners as John Hodgson and John Rose Harrison won on 38 marks to Hodgson's 45 marks with Rose two further away.

Although there were 15 competitors in Class 2 the battle was always between Dennis Wells and Stephens. Wells led in his Skoda by a mark at lunch on 11 marks but Stephens turned the tables thereafter. Dennis Taylor, on 109 marks was third in his Viva Estate.

A round only in the RAC series the sports car class of 20 was healthy indeed in numbers though two contenders fell from the fray with broken diffs. Mike Harrison and Jim Loveday suffered similarly in their Midgets and this left the field clear for a great battle between Reg Bradbury and Mike Hinde. The latter, in an Elan was handicapped by the car not running entirely to his satisfaction but even so led the class at the midway stage. Bradbury, ably backed up by son Stephen, came through to take the class in the family Sprite on 29 marks, two better than Hinde. Roger Newton made an all too infrequent appearance with his HRG which lay second at lunch.

David Carr beat son Robert by 11 marks in taking second overall and Class 4 with Vince Pashley heading the rest of the dozen strong class. In the last class Bill Moffatt made a welcome return with an Imp Sport and proved to be as competitive as ever. However, he had Bill Cook in vintage form for once and at the end of the day both had completed the 36 hills with 10 marks deficit. The results team had to go to third places before they could be split. Phil Batten also drove well to stay with the leaders, he total being 12 marks, also in an Imp.

Overall: M. J. Stephens (Mexico), 21 marks lost.

Class winners: G. Harrison (Clubman GT), 38 marks; D. Wells (Skoda), 31 marks; R. Bradbury (Sprite), 29 marks; D. Carr (Imp), 11 marks; W. Cook (Imp), 10 marks.

Splashing through a ford go the second placed crew of Brian Dennis/Gus Jones (Mini).

Courtney for Pontypridd

Pontypridd members Steve Courtney and Peter Watts easily won the Hereford Jaunt rally organised by the Herefordshire MC last Saturday night. Ideal conditions favoured high powered cars on the 140 miles route around Hay-on-Wye, Brecon and Kington and very few crews had to retire.

Courtney and Watts (RS1700) dropped 4m 44s to beat the Mini Cooper of Brian Dennis/Gus Jones who finished 7m 27s and Courtney/Watts, along with Howard Davies and Phil Jones (RS2000) who were third duly collected the team award.

Davies and Jones dropped 9m 8s and finished a long way ahead of Eric Davies and David Jones in their 2.0 Escort-BDA. The latter crew dropped 12m 7s and only beat fifth placed Bill Gwynne/Howard Moore (RS2000) by 3s. Other class winners were Robert Kelland/Alwyn Price (Escort) and Roger Matherson/Bob Lumley (Mini).

A team for all saloon series

As well as their extensive National and International activities, Samuri Racing of Bedford are equally determined in their club racing. Their theme of "Samuri Racing, a team for all saloon car championships" includes cars in both the Radio Forth and Radio One saloon car championships, as well as occasional rounds of the Britax series.

The Radio One car, raced in conjunction with, but not by, Bill Sydenham, is a brand new car and made a tremendous debut at the weekend in the hands of Win Percy. Percy was driving on road tyres for the first time, and gained an incredible pole position, which was followed up with a fine second place until the tyres went off and he dropped to fifth. Then it was disqualified over a technicality (see elsewhere) but Samuri were well pleased with its class winning performance. Percy will drive the car when he can, and will take in as many events as possible, although Sydenham is unsure of the future as he cannot do the driving and the car may be sold.

On the Scottish front, Samuri have prepared a car owned by, and to be run by Graham and Morten, Toyota dealers of Stirling, which they will run for Nial Mulloy, a former MCD School instructor. Mulloy has already beaten Eddie Labinjoh's Knockhill lap record and Samuri are again confident of a good showing in Scotland for the car.

Stringer comfortably

Steve Stringer scored a comfortable win of the first round of this year's RAC Autotest championship run by Sevenoaks and District MC at North Weald last Sunday. In the absence of several of the stars — on duty in Ireland — Stringer in his Lotus 7 finished more than 20s ahead of Dick Squire in his Sprite who took the sports car class by a similar margin.

Stringer totalled 520.9s for the 16 tests to beat a field of 38 competitors — a healthy number at this early stage of the new series.

In the small capacity Mini class, Richard Field collected the award on 594.4s which was nearly 0.5s quicker than Phil Darbyshire who borrowed a 1.0 Mini as his own car is out of action. Darbyshire finished with Neil Millins only 7s behind. Victory in the other Mini class went to the Southerner Geoff James in his Cooper who had a time of 549.5s and headed Paul Swift in a Mini GT by 23s. Mike Soanes (Clubman) was well up with the leaders initially but dropped back late in the day when he got stuck in a box.

The VW of Colin Chandler collected the combined classes three and four on 610.2s while John Plant did well with an Opel Ascona to finish only 26s adrift. Behind Squire in the sports cars, Denis Crome was 20s away in second place in his Midget and he had a fine duel with Andy Gibson (Sprite), winning by 4s. Early contender Mike Halliday retired his Sprite at lunch with a malfunctioning geardox.

BTD: S. Stringer (Lotus 7), 520.9s.

Class winners: R. Field (Cooper), 594.4s; G. James (Cooper S), 549.5s; C. Chandler (VW), 610.2s; R. Squire (Sprite), 541.6s **Best Sevenoaks member:** N. Pratten (Midget), 648.3s.

●Both Dave Page and Bob Messent took up where they left off last year in winning Senior and Middle Comp respectively at Santa Pod, both running their cars in more or less the same guise, Messent's having injection fitted to its Jaguar engine, together with a new and simplified chassis, while the Page team's main claim to fame took the form of a rather fine fire engine converted into transporter and workshop.

Malkie's trials

The odds were stacked against Cheshire Racing Team driver Vin Malkie in his first race of the year at Oulton Park on Saturday. He had to work on his ex-Ray Mallock U2 clubman's car every night for a week before the race, he had a heavy cold, he had a painfully cut hand after putting it through a glass door, and in the race the car handling was playing up and he retired after a spin.

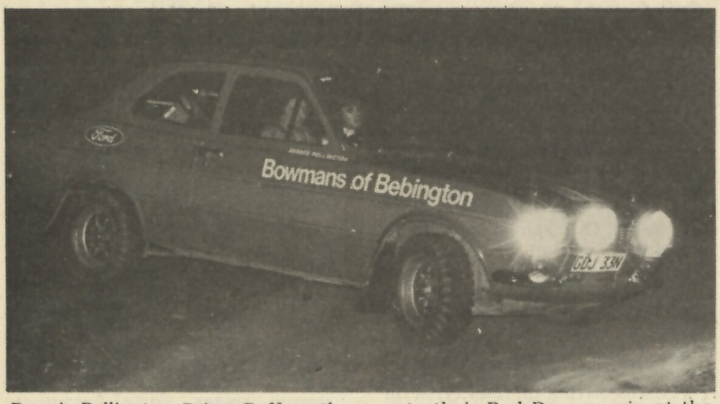
This 30-year-old motor engineer at Formula Atlantic driver Ken Bailey's Manchester garage, alternates drives with the U2 with 24-year-old packing sales representative David Marbutt, who brought to the team its Taveners Sweets sponsorship.

Trialling hots up

The eleventh championship trial, the Derbyshire takes place this Sunday near Buxton and may climax one of the most exciting seasons for a while. For in the ten rounds held so far, there have been eight different winners, and only Jack Pearce and Julian Fack have won twice. On Sunday, Fack draws level with Pearce on the number of rounds in which he has competed, so the championship trail is incredibly open.

Rallycross training

Prior to their meeting, the TEAC marshals at Lydden attended a firefighting practice/demonstration. The rallycross drivers are one bunch of competitors who put something back into their sport, for not only did they contribute some funds towards the increasingly expensive cost of the extinguishers, but one of their members, John Smith, provided an old car for them to set fire to.



Dennis Pollington/Brian Goff on the way to their Red Dragon win at the weekend.

Combinations work

Vauxhall Motoring Group (Wirral) really turned on fine organisation and an intricate route for their first restricted running of the Y-Ddraig-Goch (The Red Dragon) Rally over a 200 miles route in North Wales last Saturday night. With some 19 map changes, most of which were in the first half, they scattered a full entry of 120 crews and only the first half dozen escaped fails.

Victory went to the Bowmans of Bevington RS 2000 driven by Dennis Pollington who was navigated in fine style by Brian Goff, the pair admitting to only one two minute brainstorm in the first half. Even so the route was so tight they dropped 62m 19s on a dry, cold night which saw Pollington take fastest on the first 12 miles selective which gave him a minute advantage.

Second were Jim Corner, with whom Goff normally travels, with David Taylor, Pollington's regular man. In the Corner Mexico they dropped 64m 4s and they were quickest on the second selective which was seven miles in length.

There was a big gap before the third crew of Grant Edwards and John Savage in an RS 2000 who weighed in on 82m 14s and they were a long way ahead of the best of the semi-experts Keith Grimley and Peter Grice in a Firenza.

Several fancied crews gave up when the navigation let them down but Geoff Whittaker and Geoff Hignett were the first half retirements when the head gasket went on their Escort TC. Other notables to disappear in the second half included Skip Brown, Ron Beswick and Brian and Roger Powley.

The event was a Welsh Association and ANWCC round and as a result Pollington has taken the lead in the ANWCC series while Goff has increased his lead in the navigators section.

1, D. Pollington/B. Goff (RS 2000), 62m 19s; 2, J. Corner/D. Thomas (Mexico), 64m 4s; 3, G. Edwards/J. Savage (RS 2000), 82m 14s; 4, K. Grimley/P. Grice (Firenza), 91m 30s; 5, S. Raines/S. Gregg (Anglia), 97m 43s; 6, A. Leigh/T. Goulding (Escort TC), 107m 52s. **Novices:** K. Langley/P. Pickup (Mexico), 4F 103m 18s. **Four wheel drive:** Corp R. Sinclair/Lt M. Hyde (Landrover), 14F 113m 50s.

Allen's two pot

"Why were you only running on three cylinders?" we asked Peter Day after his 850 Mini had won its class at Oulton Park last Saturday. "It was only on two actually," was the reply. "Well, why were you only running on two then?" we asked. "It's a two cylinder car," said the driver.

Years of listening to drivers' excuses have made us take most explanations with a pinch of salt but this one was absolutely genuine. The bonnet was raised and there nestled the smallest BDA in existence. Needless to say the project is another branchild of Gordon Allen who shrugs off the many problems he must have encountered by saying that: "If you do the sums you'll find it's nothing more than half a Formula Atlantic engine really." The bore is larger and the stroke shorter than an Atlantic motor and there's a wet sump while, in customary Allen fashion, the alloy block is mated to normal Mini transmission.

Already after only three months development the engine is giving bhp in the "upper nineties" which compares well with a good 850 Imp's reputed 85/90 bhp. There remains the problem, by comparison with the rear-engined Imp, of putting the power down, but this newcomer will be a certain front-runner in the Hitachi and Esso Uniflo championships which Day, a former customer of Richard Longman for his 850 Minis, intends to contest. A confrontation with the Imp-engined Mini of Geoff Gilkes is awaited with interest.

Publicity call

Racing drivers have to get off their backsides and do something about publicising themselves. That was the message of Peter Browning, executive director of the British Racing and Sports Car Club, at the North West Centre's annual dinner dance at Wilmslow, Cheshire, on March 5.

He said: "The accent this year must be on publicity and promotion, and it would be silly if we sat back and thought that motor racing would all go on as it has in the past. We have to pull up our socks. There has to be a lot of variety, and there must be major personalities.

"Divina Galica and Ann Moore have given the sport more publicity nationally in the past week than any national driver could do, and to drivers here I say they have to get off their backsides and try to give us the publicity these girls have done.

"We might try walkabouts at Oulton Park in the near future. We have to bend a few rules and regulations to make these things work – but we have to have a go at it."

He reminded members that centre chairman John Ellison was celebrating 25 years in the club, and that there would have been no centre but for him.

The centre does not present awards at its dinners, but it made an exception for the first time for three years and awarded Mini Cooper driver George Hard a special trophy for his efforts last year. Less than two months ago George received two trophies at the Mid Cheshire Motor Racing Club dinner – the first he had ever won.

The NW Centre dinner had, said Mr Ellison, "more brass than an antique shop," and one of the brass, MCD managing director John Webb, gave the centre a trophy and £100 to use as it wishes.

Ambulance available

Making its debut in presence, but hopefully not in purpose this weekend at Brands is a brand new ambulance. It is being provided by Pilkington Motors Ltd of Chesterfield, the Central England distributors of Peugeot and the vehicle itself is a Peugeot 504 ambulance in red and white. The BRSCC are using it in conjunction with a doctor at the Race of Champions meeting. The ambulance is fully equipped with provision for oxygen and drip feed transfusion with easy access for a stretcher and bearers through the rear doors and also two side doors, while the doctor sits in front. This is probably the first time a foreign made ambulance has appeared on British circuits. It has special ambulance soft springs and bodywork by Heuliez.

Pilkington Motors are kindly making this ambulance available for use at circuits throughout Britain, and any clubs wishing to use it are asked to contact Roger Harrison at Pilkington Motors Ltd, Corporation Street, Chesterfield, or by phone to Harrison at 0246-74181.

Two Farthings make a....

Adding weight to the Supersports Register's successful B class are a couple of brothers, Don and Steve Farthing. The brothers, 20 and 17 respectively, have had a lot of success in karting and move on to Clubmans with their father's blessing and sponsorship from his Littlesea Holiday Park concern at Weymouth. Both will be contesting Silverstone's Vandervell Novice award series. It is more popular than ever apparently. Steve Farthing will be using the ex-Ken Shipley Northern championship winning Mk II/14B and Don has the ex-works Mk 16E team car.

● Making a return to the tracks and FF on Sunday is 23-year-old John Faulkner, son of golfer Max Faulkner. John raced a little in 1974 with an Ashtune hire car, but then departed to work at Ian Williams' Supernova factory in Billingshurst, Sussex. Now he's back behind the wheel again, driving a Mactek in the Brush Fusegear round at Silverstone.

Morre easily

Paul Morre from Yeovil scored a comfortable win last Sunday on the West Hants and Dorset CC Hartwell Cup production car trial near Blandford. He did the 36 hills in his Imp with the loss of only 42 marks. Second overall, and taking the Merchant Cup, was Roger Wiltshire in a Cooper S on 57 marks.

Various class winners were: Richard Pike (Mini), 33 marks; Eddie Schneider (Cooper), 83 marks; Peter Higgin (Mexico), 51 marks; Roger Moore (Popular), 75 marks; Paul Prescott (Sprite), 53 marks; Brian Main (Imp), 50 marks and John Knight (Cannon), 14 marks.

● Tonight, Thursday, sees the visit of the DTV/Castrol Road Show to Clive Skilton's premises at 185 Marshalswick Lane, St Albans, Herts. As usual there will be films and forums, plus a display including Gerry Marshall's Super Saloon 'Old Nail', Chris Coburn's CTC all black 16-valve Firenza, plus Skilton's own funny car. It all starts at 7.30 pm for 8.

The new Harrison

Peter Cooke for BRM? Well not quite, but the Dover dentist described the difference in performance between his new Harrison Clubmen's car and the latest F1 offering from Bourne as "not exactly night and day" following a test session at Snetterton recently. Although similar in appearance to last year's sinister black machine, the 1976 Harrison Mk 7B incorporates a new and much lighter chassis with wider suspension which Peter reckons will be fine on the tighter circuits but probably a handicap at Silverstone "where I tend to fall asleep on the straights anyway." Another tweak is the addition of a fifth spring at the rear to counter wheelspin.

With Geoff Friswell moving into FF2000 this year, Cooke's new car could well be the one to beat in the Sytner of Nottingham championship for which the most coveted award is a lap of honour in the passenger seat of Frank's Porsche!

Tom Airey leads away Keith Ripp and John Smith's Escort at Lydden on Sunday. Airey won.

Airey beats the dust

That perverse English phenomenon, the weather, produced not one but two problems for competitors to contend with at Lydden last Sunday, for not only was there a bitterly cold wind but early morning snow failed to lay the dust which proved an increasing menace as the day progressed. For this, the second round of the TEAC/Lydden series, the entry was similar to the first and, despite the completely different conditions, the result was the same, with Tom Airey victorious and John Button equal second, this time with George Warren. The non-qualifiers final also provided the same winner, Mick Bird, who again had his problem in qualifying, rolling his Mini as he traversed the meadow. A spot of panel beating and all was well, so Mick went through to defeat an impressive Graham Hathaway in his David Rowe Racing Escort and the Minis of Peter Daniels and John Binning who had a fine battle early on in the final, as well as in two previous runs.

The points scoring groups produced some fresh faces up front as well as some omissions. These latter included Trevor Reeves who, after setting second fastest time in qualifying, albeit four seconds slower than Tom Airey's 2m 51.5s, could not make the championship runs due to scrutineering problems over his dynamo.

These runs commenced in great style with Tom Airey and John Button swapping places at every bend before Tom came out on top. The Minis of Graham Strugnell and Bruce Bamber were similarly close in the next race and surprisingly the Wessex Racing man had to give best to Graham. The next few runs tended to lose this impetus, although Button and Bamber had another fine race near the finish. Airey, Bamber, Button, George Warren's familiar Castrol Escort and the Minis of Devonian Gordon Rogers and Sandy Donald made up the final. Button and Bamber were engrossed in a close lead battle until Airey, storming through from the rear, moved into an invincible lead round the outside of Pits Bend on lap two. Bruce then dropped well back and Button was left second from a closing Warren, while Donald narrowly claimed fourth from Bamber.

Misfortune struck some of the others to reach the last eighteen. Strugnell glanced the sleeper on the outside by the start line on his final run, retiring soon afterwards to end an impressive day, while fellow Mini driver Richard Painton pulled off after leading his first race, and found that the dust so inhibited his visibility in the later runs when other cars were in front that he slowed right up for safety's sake. Roger Brunt, winner at Snetterton two weeks earlier, lost out in a good scrap with Paul Springett's Mini in the first of the final runs then spun into the bank on the inside of Pits Bend on the second. Tony Merridale was going probably better that ever before at Lydden, the loose dry surface more to his liking, and he only narrowly failed to make it a second Escort in the final.

Final: 1, Tom Airey (Mini); 2, John Button (VW); 3, George Warren (Escort); 4, Sandy Donald (Mini).

Overall points: 1, Airey 14; 2, = Button and Warren, 9; 4, = Gordon Rogers (Mini) and Donald, 8; 6, Bruce Bamber (Mini), 7; 7, = Tony Merridale (Escort) and Graham Strugnell (Mini), 6.

Points position after two rounds: 1, Airey 25; 2, Button, 19; 3, Rogers and Warren, 15; 5, David Potter, 10.

Not Coburn but Lacey

It was perhaps appropriate that a Vauxhall should win last Saturday's Vauxhall MC's Uniflo Championship Rally down in Beds, Bucks and Oxon, but it was not Messrs Coburn and Spokes who took the glory. Chris Lacey, a Vauxhall employee, was the man of the dry, cold night, for along with Martin Group retained co-driver Peter Valentine they won the 170 mile event by almost a minute in a Firenza.

On an event which attracted 90 competitors the first half was cleaned by at least four crews, the only major disaster occurring when Derek Skinner and Peter Rushforth seemingly got out of phase on the yumps on the selective and badly damaged their MGB when eventually the sports car rolled.

Things were much tighter in the second half, which also had a selective, and Lacey and Valentine came home on 17m 29s to beat the usual horde of Ford products.

Tony Aitchinson and Brian Titchmarsh were second in a Mexico on 18m 10s with Terry Arnold and Victor Clarke, in another Mexico, taking third on 19m 45s. Fourth and only seven seconds adrift were Roland Shepherd and Mike Wise in their RS 2000. Fairly close to them in fifth were Keith Bushby and Ian Simpson (RS 2000), and Ian Pettie and John Jones completed the first half dozen in their Mexico. What happened to Coburn and Spokes in a Chevette? Sad to say Rodney was adrift with his plotting and they collected at least three fails.

1, C. Lacey/P. Valentine (Firenza), 17m 29s; 2, T. Aitchinson/B. Titchmarsh (Mexico), 18m 10s; 3, T. Arnold/V. Clarke (Mexico), 19m 45s; 4, R. Shepherd/M. Wise (RS 2000), 19m 52s; 5, K. Bushby/I. Simpson (RS 2000), 20m 31s; 6, I. Pettie/J. Jones (Mexico), 20m 36s.

White's right night route

The only crew to find the correct way out of the famous, or infamous Normandy junction, Geoff White and Roger Hunt justifiably won last Saturday night's second running of the Living Fire Rally, run by West Hants and Dorset CC who had an entry of 31 crews.

The Ferndown builder and his Poole navigator drove a Cooper S round the 140 miles route — all in Dorset — and dropped nine minutes on the way. The route included an 11 mile selective in the tail.

Last year's winner Mike Manning and Dave Thomas finished second but only just for they tied with Dave Appleton and Terry Mills with 10m lost. However, Manning was more than two minutes quicker on the selective after all other tie deciders had failed.

Mexicos occupied the next three places on the leaderboard with Ron Anderson and Freda Brake beating Gerry Morgan and Tom Jones by a minute but Gordon Woodford and Murray Barbur were some way behind.

1, G. White/R. Hunt (Cooper S), 9m; 2, M. Manning/D. Thomas (RS 2000), 10m; 3, D. Appleton/T. Mills (Cooper S), 10m; 4, R. Anderson/Miss F. Brake (Mexico), 16m; 5, G. Morgan/T. Jones (Mexico), 17m; 6, G. Woodford/M. Barbur (Mexico), 23m. **Semi-experts:** Mrs M. Short/J. Short (Mexico), 23m. **Novices:** D. and W. Smith (Mini), 100m.

Drake wins selectively

By being fastest over the two selectives by more than two minutes Chris Drake and Dave Coustick ran out easy winners on the 18th Eastwood Rally, run by Eastwood and District MC over a 185 mile route mainly in the Peak District.

Driving an Avenger Drake put up fastest time on one of the two selectives yet finished 2m 16s up on the rest of an entry of 65 crews. Total penalties of the winning crew were 2m 20s.

In a close finish for second spot Paul Rayner and John Barker (Cooper S) beat Mike Hutchinson and Ian Humphrey in a standard Hunter by only nine seconds, while the BMW 1600 of B. Jones and M. Watson was a mere nine seconds away in fourth.

The first Escort was down in fifth place where John Sadler and John Haslam were nearly two minutes down and the best of the semi-experts were Peter Betteley and Jim Lock in their Mexico.

1, L. C. Drake/D. Coustick (Avenger), 2m 20s; 2, P. Rayner/J. Barker (Cooper S), 5m 36s; 3, M. Hutchinson/I. Humphrey (Hunter), 5m 45s; 4, B. Jones/M. Watson (BMW), 5m 54s; 5, J. Sadler/J. Haslam (RS 2000), 7m 49s; 6, P. Betteley/J. Lock (Mexico), 8m 20s. **Novices:** P. Tetlow/J. Cartwright (Mexico), 42m 1s.

New cars

Colin Richards, whose . . th birthday it was, has forsaken his familiar black Escort and while building up a new model for the European series, having gained increased backing from VW Derrington and Duckhams, borrowed a road-going/sprint Escort twincam for the day. After a splendid first dice with Tony Merridale ended with the battery coming adrift, he only failed to make the non-qualifiers final by 0.5 second.

David Potter was also out in a new model, his virgin white Mini having its debut in very much an unsorted state. David also has full backing to do the British series and with six weeks before his next outing hopes to do some useful development work after Sunday's initial promising first appearance.

Silverstone Radio One

Among the Radio One entries in the over £2,400 class at Silverstone are the BMWs 3.0S of Jim Marsden and Simon Watson. Watson again has L and G Fire Protection support, which his landlord, Peter Jopp briefly wore on Sunday at Brands Hatch, while Marsden flies the flag for General Relays. Brian Pepper is another to fly the General Relays flag in the same class, but this time in an Opel Commodore. With Tony Lanfranchi's Marshall Wingfield entered Commodore, they're up against a trio of Capris, BMWs, two Dolomite Sprints, a BMW 2002 Tii and an Alfa 2000GTV.

Oh dear – first time unlucky. Steve O'Hara's Midget rests on its roof after inversion at the opening meeting at Croft. Chris Meek's winning Europa passes.

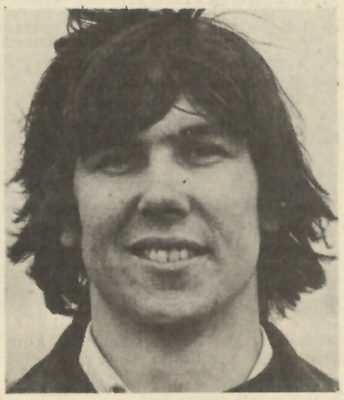
Высококачественная белая офисная бумага КСЕРОКС «Бизнес»

Bird flies to Wessex

Wessex Motor Racing Developments Ltd have varied activities planned for this year's rallycross season. The company prepare both chassis and engines for rallycross use as well as for Hot Rod racing and they have a large programme planned.

There will be a works car for Bruce Bramber, a Wessex director who will be running a 1.5 Mini with support from Minilite. Bramber came in fourth at the Brands rallycross. Judith Jesty will also have a works car with both 1.5 and 1.3 engines. Mrs Jesty lives not far from Wessex' Swanage base, and has shown considerable promise in past seasons.

As well as works cars, the company are also supporting a number of drivers. Paul Springett, the company feel, has shown a lot of potential in his first year of rallycross (1975) and the company will be responsible for further chassis and engine developments on his 1275 cc Cooper S. Dick Griffiths will also have a Wessex engine in his ex-Keith Ripp Mini while both Trevor Reeves and David Potter are using rolling shells prepared at Swanage. The company are continuing their interests in Hot Rod with a number of cars.



● *Late news: On Monday evening Bruce Bamber said that Mick Bird (above) had agreed to drive for Wessex in Britain and Europe this year. A new Clubman shell is to be prepared. Bird has been driving for Tom Airey, although he has been playing second fiddle to Airey of late which may have precipitated his move.*

Smith and Hawke plan FF

With the decline of F5000, Alan Smith, the Derby engine builder is becoming involved in the world of Formula Ford, courtesy of Hawke and together they want to get further involved in FF racing in the States. Smith will, however, be providing an engine for Irish FF driver Bernard Devaney.

Hawke will also be works supporting two Hawkes this year, those of Derek Warwick who has Warwick Trailers support, and Rick Morris who has Oceanair support, the freight company being the Clubmans sponsors. Both drivers will run DL15s in which the works have considerable faith this year.

● New entry in the Radio One series at Silverstone is Tony Hill, a rugby player from Coleshill, Birmingham, aged 30, who will be driving a Triumph Dolomite Sprint this Sunday.

Aintree lives

Good news from Aintree. By arrangement with the Walton Group, motor racing seems to be with the circuit to stay. Although the first meeting on May 8 has had to be cancelled, the other meetings should now run as per calendar without interruption.

The Tuesday evening practice sessions should start after the Grand National, and at £3 with a bonus for regular users, should be one of the cheapest around. The usual emergency facilities will be available. Meanwhile membership fees to the Aintree Circuit Club have been fixed as last year.

The circuit is also available for other venues, and any interested parties should contact the club secretary.

Wood's good start

Former Clubmans driver Tim Wood looks set to do well in *Libre* racing this year in his John Thistlethwaite-supported Brabham-FVC BT35. This is the ex-Bob Salisbury, John Wingfield car which was procured from the ubiquitous Bob Howlings. Despite a bad misfire and decidedly twitchy handling the car finished a good third at Croft on Sunday, and the promising Wood actually got down into the 1m 5s bracket in his first test session in the car at Croft.

Skilton's plans for Barnett

The Skilton Motor Group plans to run two cars during the forthcoming season. Clive Skilton himself will be leaving shortly for the United States to supervise the delivery of his 1976 entry, to be powered by the all-aluminium Donovan engine which still holds the UK record at 224.72 mph.

Meanwhile Skilton's 1975 Funny Car VX 4/90 was driven by Peter Barnett for the first time at Santa Pod over the weekend. The Skilton Motor Group will continue their close association with Vauxhall and Castrol during the forthcoming season.

● Not mentioned in our Thruxton results were three new lap records for the three new classes of mod-sports. Ian Hall is the man who owns the 1151 cc to 1500 cc record in his 1.4 Mini-Jem at 1m 31.8s, 92.39 mph, while Dave Bettinson took the 1500cc to 2000cc record at 1m 35.6s, 88.72 mph. The new over 2000 cc record went to Jonathan Palmer at 1m 30.8s, 93.41 mph.

Silverstone FF entries

There are a number of interesting competitors in the first round of the Brush Fusegear Formula Ford championship at Silverstone on Sunday. For a start, David Sears, son of former International saloon and sports car driver Jack Sears is making his debut in an Ashtune entered Van Diemen prior to buying his own car. Then there's Heather Longhurst, who after driving an Alexis of late, has sufficiently impressed the Jim Russell Racing Drivers School to enter her in a Van Diemen after completing the school.

Youngest of the drivers must surely be Tom Wood at 17, an engineering apprentice from Dorridge, Solihull, who prepares his own Hawke DL11. Wood was a former member of the British Junior Kart team. Then there's 22-year-old Joe Kelly, assistant manager of the Roebuck pub in Hampstead who walked, sponsored, from London to Wallasey to raise money to race and drives a Scorpion Racing Services Royale RP21. Another to drive the same kind of car is 19-year-old student Kim Furner who has the ex-Geoff Smailes car with Harlequin Wallcoverings sponsorship.

A hard luck story surrounds the new Dastle FF which is to be driven by Rupert Suren, a restaurateur who sold his house to go motor racing having given up once before in 1973 due to lack of finance.

Orbell at Snetterton

David Orbell convincingly took BTD in a Stallwood U2 at the annual Cambridge University Automobile club Spring Sprint at Snetterton on February 29. In ideal conditions and against 66 other competitors, he also took second fastest time in another U2.

BTD: David Orbell (Stallwood U2), 67.9s.
Class winners: Tony Brew (Mini), 103.0s; Ian Marshall (Alfasud T1), 96.6s; Bert Wood (BMW 2002 Tii), 87.9s; Peter Jones (Capri 3000GT), 89.6s. Mike Paton (Imp), 85.2s; Steve Muir (Mini), 88.7s; C. P. Hewerdine (Mustang), 85.6s; Hales Vaughan (Midget), 95.5s; Paul Berman (Lotus Elan), 86.1s; Paul Pycroft (Porsche Turbo), 86.5s; A. Bishop/I. Hulett (Davrian), 84.1s; Rex Greenslade (Europa), 78.8s; David Orbell (Stallwood U2), 67.9s; Peter Podle (Alexis), 79.0s; J. McDougall (Magnum), 91.1s; Dave Wale) Mini, 97.6s.

● Latest rallycross drivers, and the last we hear, to gain free cans of GTX from Castrol include Mick Bird, Roger Brunt and John Smith.

Sims and the beaches

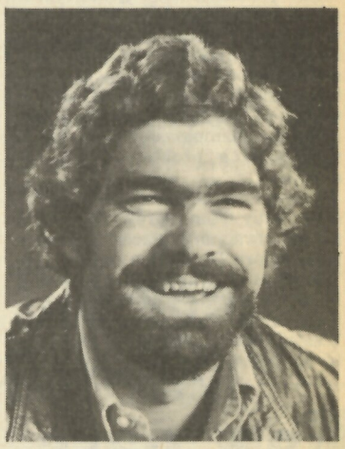
Newquay photographer Chris Sims, who was racing at Thruxton on Sunday, has sponsorship this year again from the members of Newquay Hotels and Catering Association to run the car advertising "Newquay, Finest Beaches in Cornwall". His Vauxhall Magnum, repaired after its shunt at Llandow last year, is still only powered by the single overhead cam engine, and Sims is looking for sponsorship from a go-ahead Vauxhall dealer to continue development and obtain a twin cam engine.

● DJM Records marked the first round of their 1976 Formula Ford championship at Thruxton with gold- and silver-plated seven inch discs for the winner and runner-up in the BARC organised race. The lucky recipients were Jim Walsh, the winner, and David Heale who was second.

Notz in FF2000

Take a Crossle 31F, power it with a Titan engine and win the Allied Polymer Group FF2000 series; that's what Derek Lawrence did last year anyway. But this year there's only one man using the same combination and he's 1975 Venezuelan Formula Ford champion Oscar Notz from Caracas. Notz has been using a Titan Mk 6 in Venezuela and Titan will continue to support him during the forthcoming season. Notz' first race will not be this weekend at Brands Hatch, but he hopes to contest future rounds.

Oscar Notz – winning combination?



● The Mini Seven Racing Club are already looking to the 1977 season. They're asking members for suggested changes to the regs for that season and ideas on alterations.

● Eastbourne and District MC has arranged their RAC and BT&RDA Autotest Championship round for April 11. Loughborough Car Club, who originally had this date, have moved to May 23 and the Bath MC event, scheduled for October 10, has been brought forward to July 18.

Cavalier GL Coupé.
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And with good reason because the new Vauxhall is as exciting to drive as its elegant and aerodynamic lines suggest.

Its 1.9 litre engine will accelerate you from 0.50 mph in 8 seconds* and give you a top speed of around 105 mph.* The functional yet eminently stylish front end air-spoiler increases road holding and reduces drag. A combination that ensures effortless motorway cruising, the sort of acceleration that can 'get-you-out-of-trouble' fast and an economy figure of 33 mpg.†

Add the fully integrated roll-over bar, the Coupé's 5½ inch wide sports wheels with 185 SR x 13 radials and the sports steering wheel and you can see you have a thoroughbred car in the true sports car tradition.

Like all Cavaliers the Coupé has outstanding road-holding and braking. You get the preciseness of its rack and pinion steering and the stability from its independent front and rear anti-roll bars. Plus the confidence of dual circuit servo assisted brakes with big front discs and load conscious valve to reduce the risk of the rear wheels locking.

And, of course, the story doesn't end there — the list of standard equipment is equally impressive. It includes reclining front seats, luxurious velour cloth trim and cut-pile wall-to-wall carpeting extending onto the lower door trims, heated rear window, elect screenwash, two speed wipers, centre cons to take all those odds and ends, reversing lights, hazard warning flashers, a door map pocket, and opening rear ¼ vents.

Then there's those little touches that makes motoring so much more of a pleasu for driver and passenger alike — the quartz activated clock, continental arm rests, the illuminated glove box, cigar lighter and ashtray, the anti-dazzle rear view mirror, the passenger vanity mirror, and the boot light.

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*Manufacturers own figure. †Figure obtained through manufacturers own fuel consumption tests to DIN 70030. The Cavalier 'GL' Coupé costs £2843.10 including Car Tax and VAT. Delivery charges and number plates extra. Price and specifications correct at time of going to press.